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FOR
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ESPECIALLY ADDRESSED TO YOUNG HOUSEWIVES.



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"LET ALL THINGS BE DONE DECENTLY AND IN ORDER."

"THE BLESSING OF THE LORD IT MAKETH RICH, AND HE ADDETH NO
BORROW WITH IT."

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LONDON:
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A. & C. BLACK, EDINBURGH; J. M^cGLASHAN, DUBLIN.
1852.

268. c. 330.

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DEDICATION.

TO THOSE WHOSE FAVOURED POSITION IN SOCIETY
REMOVES "FAR FROM THEM BOTH POVERTY AND RICHES ;"

TO THOSE ON WHOM THE HAPPINESS AND
SECURITY OF THE MOST USEFUL AND INFLUENTIAL OF THEIR
COUNTRYMEN MUST PRINCIPALLY DEPEND ;

TO THOSE WHO MAY BE THE MOST MISERABLE OR MOST
BLESSED OF THEIR SEX, AS THEY NEGLECT OR VALUE THE
PECULIAR ADVANTAGES OF THEIR STATION ;

TO THE
YOUNG WIVES AND HOUSEWIVES OF THE
MIDDLE CLASSES ;

THIS ATTEMPT AT THE EXPOSURE AND DESTRUCTION OF THEIR
MOST INSIDIOUS AND DEADLY ENEMY,
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED AND INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

ONLY a few months ago, I announced the long-delayed completion of the present little work, with an earnest request to my friendly and numerous connections, that *no one*, who could not conscientiously recommend it for its own sake, should, on any account, do so for mine.

It is true that as far as thought, labour, and prayer could contribute to its prosperity, I had done my very best for it. I had also for many years been in the constant *practice*, if not in the *profession* of writing; but this last attempt was of so *very* different a character from all I had previously undertaken, that any former approbation gained might, I felt, be rather to my prejudice than in my favour. Still, under cover of a new monogram, I had some hopes that household precepts drawn from the practice of individuals who were evidently in the right, joined to warnings from the fate of others as evidently in the wrong, might, notwithstanding—or even, in some measure, *owing* to the quaint guise in which they were arrayed—prove useful and acceptable, always provided that, amongst the varieties of publications continually issued, the subject were not entirely exhausted. Of this the retirement in which I now reside, and the consequent

absence of literary information or criticism to counteract the blindness of self-estimation or the loving partiality of my own immediate circle, I had no opportunity of judging ; and thus, in committing my " Home Truths for Home Peace" to publisher and printer, at the distance of upwards of 600 miles, I was yet more prepared for their failure than success, especially as Truth is not generally considered a very saleable commodity. A call for a second and larger edition without delay affords the comfortable assurance that the first has been kindly welcomed. I have now, therefore, only to accompany my second edition with grateful acknowledgments of the indulgence shown to this my humble effort to contribute *something* towards the mirth and wisdom, honesty and truth of my generation, and to express my heartfelt wish that the present year, 1852, may witness the increasing beneficial influence of my own sex in its own proper sphere of action, suffering, honour, usefulness, and happiness—*at Home !*

January, 1852.

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NOTE.

After the work now offered to the public was completed, the author was induced to modify the title she had chosen, by its being represented to her that the common expression for uncommon confusion—"Muddle"—might frighten the fastidious from its perusal. That a "household word," which has not unfrequently fallen from the lips of the refined and educated in her presence, was calculated to do violence to "ears polite," had never entered the author's imagination, nor was it practicable to substitute another, or a more elegant appellation for the inelegant evil she had endeavoured to expose, without entirely changing the character of the book. Still, being very unwilling to offend any whom she might possibly benefit, the author consented to qualify her title-page, and, in so doing, has rendered her first chapter less appropriate than it was intended to be. She has, therefore, to apologize for her "apology;" and, at the same time, to express a hope that the general tone and spirit of her Home Truths will answer for the purity of her intentions in the use of the familiar language she has employed in her desire to promote Home Peace.

HOME TRUTHS FOR HOME PEACE.

PART I.

MUDDLE DETECTED.*

CHAPTER I.

THE AUTHOR'S APOLOGY.—Attention to the whole of the title page requested. The Author does not attempt to describe more than one branch of the vast Upas tree now overshadowing the world.—Fable of the lame man and the blind, as illustrative of the power that the most infirm may yet have to assist in alleviating the infirmities of others.

SHOULD any of my readers belong to the numerous class, who, after a momentary glance at the lettered cover of a new publication, pass on immediately to the contents of its first chapter, they are courteously requested to turn back to my title page, and to read it with due attention before proceeding further. For, without such limitation as is there clearly specified, what, in the present fearful times of general confusion, might not reasonably or unreasonably be demanded from any volume, bearing MUDDLE on its back?

Is not Commerce in a Muddle? Is not Agriculture in a Muddle? Are not Church and State in a Muddle?

* See Note on p. xvi.

Are not the Poor in a Muddle? Are not the Rich in a Muddle? Are not the Laws in a Muddle? Are not we all in a Muddle? At least, as far as any woman can make out what any man can mean when he talks politics, everybody says we are in a dreadful muddle, whilst nobody sees how anybody is to get out. And, alas! to look beyond the precincts of our sea-girt isles, is not our neighbour France in a continual Muddle? And our neighbour's neighbours, throughout continental Europe, is not Muddle increasing amongst them? Or, farther and farther still, is there any state or country that is not in a Muddle? And, but for the consolatory belief that the creature's extremity is the Creator's opportunity, and that the knowledge of the Lord shall ultimately prevail against, and reform, the ignorance of man, can any finite sagacity suggest a remedy for the universal evil?

Now truly, if books were to fulfil the promise of their titles, any dissertation upon Muddle *in general* would be a most unprofitable inquiry into the moral and political condition of the greater part, if not of all the world.

An undertaking from which far higher powers and abler pens might shrink, is certainly no task for mine; and thus, in choosing Muddle for my theme, I limit myself to that family confusion and disorder to which custom more usually restricts its signification.

Of the great Upas tree, which, in the vast length and breadth thereof, is now overshadowing society, I have seen comparatively but little;—of the *one* branch, *Domestic Muddle*, I have, at different periods and in different countries and situations of life, had opportunities of seeing a great deal; and I now propose to

offer a description of what I have seen, and to furnish my readers with such precautionary antidotes as I have also collected in my wanderings, and which may happily prevent their slumbering and sleeping beneath its baneful influence.

Should any, from the first glance at my title, be led to ask for more, and feel disposed to resent their disappointment, let them remember that there are "Histories of the Universe" in small octavos, "Complete Arts" and "Congregated Sciences" in duodecimo abridgments, "Whole Duties of Man" in penny pamphlets, and thousands of other volumes, in which the stately tree of knowledge represented in the frontispiece, is followed by a few dry leaves and twigs thereof, scattered amongst its several pages. Let them remember this, nor deny to *my* shortcoming an impunity so generally conceded to that of others.

Besides, although I treat but of one branch of Muddle, it is a branch of so much importance—one containing so much nourishment for the main stem—that, could it be thoroughly destroyed, it is possible the root itself might also, eventually, wither and decay.

Of the weakness with which the task I have attempted has been executed, I am fully conscious; neither have I ventured to appear in the character of censor of the imperfections of others without a humbling recollection of my own. But, if reprovers were expected to be perfect, the world, excepting in the inspired pages, must go unadmonished; and, whilst every individual has his own peculiar infirmities and advantages, it suffices for the general welfare, that the good which is in each, should be exercised and mutually distributed.

As in the pretty fable of the lame man, who is

carried by the blind companion to whom he serves as guide,—*both* safely reach the spot at which *neither* could have arrived alone,—even so, those who are but too fallible, in many respects, themselves, may nevertheless, make such a beneficial interchange of the knowledge and virtues mingled with their frailties, as will cheer and shorten the common road on which they have to journey, until, happily entering their destined home, they rest and rejoice together.



CHAPTER II.

GENERAL FEATURES OF "MUDDLE."—"Always doing and never done."—The different characters and circumstances of the different families into which "Muddle" enters, cannot prevail against the levelling practices of the confusing principle.—The Irish lady's opinion concerning the comparative disagreeables of "a Muddle" *with* young children, and "a Muddle" *without*.

"ALWAYS DOING, NEVER DONE."

MY dear readers ! especially my female readers, have you never observed and marvelled at that nearest, but most unsatisfactory approach to perpetual motion, existing in domestic life, which I have chosen as the motto of my present chapter ?

Have you never been in houses and in families where all the labour and sorrow,—the getting up and washing up,—the mending and making, the cooking and baking,—the sweeping and rubbing, the cleaning and scrubbing,—the folding and scolding, the blacking and clacking,—the smashing and crashing,—the petting and fretting,—the sighing and crying,—the calling and bawling,—the falling and squalling,—were going on from morning till night ; and, notwithstanding the united efforts of mistress, maids and children, thus indefatigably employed, nothing was clean, nothing was mended, nothing was made, nothing was ready ; but everything was left in more dirt and disorder at the end of the day, than if the whole of the "*Dramatis personæ*" had been sitting all the four-and-twenty hours with their hands before them ?

I doubt not that, unless you have been singularly happy, or singularly unobserving, you have noticed such a state of things in several of the domestic circles to which you have been admitted; and, if so, you have as certainly sympathized with the poor, untidy, worn-out housewife, lamented over the unhappy, peevish, piggish children, pitied the dirty, over-driven, harassed maids, joined with all in wondering how the day went, and found the bad temper of the "gudeman" on his return to such a dwelling, the only "matter of course" you could discover.


In a certain part of Yorkshire, this domestic fuss and fermentation is termed a *Mullypuffle*, a word that struck me as so remarkably expressive, that I had some thoughts of adopting it as the title to the present volume; but my publisher, having represented to me that our more common designation, "MUDDLE," is equally expressive and more generally understood, I have yielded to his better judgment; although, from the extraordinary classical appellations under which ordinary unclassical commodities are brought to market now-a-days, a title *not* generally understood, might be supposed peculiarly attractive.

Relinquishing, then, all the advantages of *wilful* unintelligibility, I proceed to observe concerning MUDDLE, as a proof of its great and overpowering influence, that, whatever striking differences may exist in the numbers, characters, occupations, or fortunes of the families in which it dwells; all and each of these will present such a similarity of aspect, that every favorable or unfavorable distinction in their households will be entirely forgotten, and Muddle, and muddle *only*, remain conspicuously in view.

A good husband or a bad husband,—no children or no end to them,—one servant or half a dozen,—a large house or a small house,—living in or near a town, or far away in the country,—dining early or dining late,—seeing company or seeing none,—being rich and young, or being poor and old—all these peculiar circumstances and contrarieties, which, otherwise, are calculated to make the greatest difference imaginable, have no more power over the impartial proceedings of a Muddle, than the various choice plants or common weeds in different soils, would have over the grubbing propensities of any pig, allowed to bring his snout amongst them.

As a lady from “dear Erin” once observed, there was no denying that the muddle where there *were* young children was much worse ; but yet, as far as she could perceive, a muddle where there were *no* children, was never any better.

Those who have been witnesses of both, will be nearly of her opinion ; for the elements of disorder and discomfort are, in each instance, masters ; and it must be ill abiding wherever they hold dominion.



CHAPTER III.

CERTAIN ANOMALIES AND PHENOMENA PECULIAR TO "MUDDLE."

—Logicians and Metaphysicians having been vainly consulted on the subject, an appeal is made to any Magician in the secret, why all that is cause and *effect* in other families, should, under the influence of "Muddle," be so lamentably cause and *defect*. —Instances in which this deviation from common expectation and experience is most remarkable: the worst fires consuming the most coal,—the smallest cleanliness resulting from the greatest washing,—mustard-pot, tea-caddy, decanters, etc., empty, *because* they are continually filled, etc.

HAVING vainly studied the general laws of cause and effect, in reference to the subject, and being unable to obtain from logician or metaphysician a solution of my particular difficulty, I am now reduced to apply to any magician who may be in the secret, to satisfy my anxious curiosity.

How or wherefore is it, that, whilst under all other circumstances, certain actions will produce certain corresponding results, and certain causes be followed by certain natural effects,—these very actions and identical causes, should, under the influence of Muddle, be brought forward as valid excuses or unanswerable reasons for the existence of something which, according to common experience and expectation, is entirely unconnected with them.

The following anomalies, selected from the many that have puzzled wiser heads than mine, are offered for consideration to any who will charitably endeavour to elucidate their apparent contradictions.

1st. The fires being always particularly low and

dusty, and showing no power of warming you but by exciting your hot displeasure,—it is asserted, that, “there never was a family in which more coal was burnt, and that the scuttle is being filled all day !”

2ndly. The garments of mistress, maids, and children being especially dirty and untouchable, it is explained that “there is no end to the washing in the house;” whilst, should anything strike you as dirtier than usual, you are quieted with the most solemn and reiterated assurances that “’twas just that moment clean !” *

3rdly. There being no mustard in the mustard-pot, no salt in the salt-cellar, no tea in the tea-caddy, and no wine in the decanters, you may be quite certain that there was fresh mustard made “only the other day;” since which nothing requiring mustard has been brought to table; whilst the salt-cellar, tea-caddy, and wine-decanters are empty from no other reason, than *because* the lady of the house always makes a point of seeing to these things herself; and, whatever other omissions may be laid to her charge, as to domestic duties in general, she cannot tax her memory with *ever* having neglected these.

4thly. The room in which you breakfast being covered with the identical crumbs and pieces you had observed

* To the existence of the above-mentioned contradictory facts, the author can bear ample testimony; the great washes of families in a muddle, invariably being distinguished for bearing an inverse proportion to the small cleanliness maintained in them. At what precise moment any of the washing garments are *not* dirty, no one has been able to inform her; but that an immense number are occasionally put into the way of being dirtied over again, by having a vast deal of soap and time expended over them, and being left in the passage for the mangling-woman, who never seems to call for the clothes excepting when they are *not* ready, to this many besides the author can bear witness.

the day before, their appearance is accounted for by the maid having left every other apartment in the house, in order to bestow on *this* an extra and a thorough sweeping. You dare not then dispute the visits of the broom and duster, nor question the exertions of their presiding divinity; but you remain wonderstruck at the astonishing, but partial memory, which enables a person so addicted to the misplacing of much larger articles, to put back, even to the fraction of a fragment, every unsightly item that her thorough sweeping must have moved. Not a table straight, not a chair in its place, not an ornament wherever it had been before, or ever should be seen again; but each scrap, each crumb, and every particle of dust restored to the exact spot on which you had first noticed it!

5thly. There being a continual dearth of jugs, plates, and basins, you are *credibly* informed that an unusually large assortment of crockery had been originally purchased, and that there must be yet more of such articles in the house, *somewhere*, than are ever likely to be wanted.

But time and credulity alike would fail to show how "large fires and being before them an extra twenty minutes," will underdo the mutton, and "scarcely fire enough to boil a pipkin," with a much shorter period, will overdo the beef; how the wishy-washiest tea is infallibly produced by two additional spoonfuls, and the coldest coffee ever filtered claims to have been made with the most furiously boiling water; how, having rooms well-aired and opening all the windows, makes them close, and shutting out the weather and keeping excellent fires will make them cold; how "studying economy in everything, and denying one's self the com-

mon necessities of life," gets through a deal of money ; and, finally, how "the striving in every way to afford pleasure and comfort to everybody," is sure to make you enemies, and to set all your family against you !

That the above and similar anomalies exist under the influence of Muddle, the general experience of those who know anything about it must surely testify ; and I now humbly but earnestly request of all the —*icians*, *osophers*, and *ologists* to say if, in all the *icsophies* and *ologies*, they can find any assignable reason why everything that should be cause and *Effect*, is, in certain families, so lamentably cause and *Defect*.



CHAPTER IV.

ONLY POSSIBLE EXPLANATION OF THE PHENOMENA OF "MUD-DLE" THAT CAN EXCULPATE ITS SUPPORTERS FROM THE CHARGE OF HABITUAL FALSEHOOD: that so-called *inanimate objects* have a latent and inferior spirit, enabling them to take undue liberties with themselves and others, whenever the restraining government of higher natures is removed.—The common experience and phraseology of all countries bears out this theory, a certain intangible "nobody" being referred to "even in the best-regulated families," as author of the most fatal fractures and disasters.—What *things* are capable of "*in a Muddle*," when, if they do not attend themselves, it is certain nobody else will.—The dilemma in which the advocates of "Muddle" place themselves, if this theory is rejected.

"PARLO DI COSA INCREDIBILE E VERA."

A THING ALIKE INCREDIBLE AND TRUE.

WHEN ordinary influences lose their power, and the general harmony and routine of nature are interrupted or reversed, without any assignable reason, it is but fair to suppose that some extraordinary, if not miraculous agency, must be at work; and thus, in the absence of any more obvious solution of the anomalies signalled in the preceding chapter, I cannot hesitate to accept the following; viz., that—

Objects, generally considered inanimate and stationary; and, as such, usually and properly placed under subjection to higher animate and intellectual beings, become, in the absence of such lawful and superior authority, endowed with certain lower faculties of volition and locomotion, which, by enabling them to

take their government upon themselves, produces the singular results alluded to.

Such is the MAGICIAN's answer ; and, strange as this theory at first appears, a little reflection will convince us that it is not altogether new ; for, in fact, the existence of a latent inferior spirit in so-called *in-animate* objects, prompting and enabling them to take liberties with themselves and others, has long been tacitly acknowledged, " even in the best-regulated families." From the earliest traditions or records in which domestic utensils or establishments are mentioned, it is certain that facts and fractures have continually occurred which can hardly be accounted for on any other principle. Not only will THINGS " get worn out," considerably in advance of the probable and natural period of their existence : but they, ever and anon, evince a desperate resentment at their reputed want of animation, by various energetic attempts at immediate self-destruction ; attempts which " *the greatest possible care* " on the part of the higher natures in the household, is entirely powerless to frustrate.

Cups, so long as there have been cups, have *slipped out* of the maid's hands ; and this, *not* when she has let them go, but whilst holding them " *as tight as ever she could hold.*" Glasses, etc., are constantly falling off the *edges* of dressers and of tables, although declared by competent judges to have been *far removed* from such a dangerous position, so that they have evidently moved back again for the purpose of dashing themselves into a thousand shivers. Other articles of fragile materials, but less daring resolution, vary the monotony of their existence, and assert their right to tender consideration by " *getting* " such chips, cracks and contusions as no

rational *person* could ever venture to inflict. Nor are the harder and less sensitive portions of our household furniture innocent of similar offences; the locks, which, as fixtures, are secure from injury, by falling, will nevertheless, "*get hampered*"—steals "*come unglued*"—nails "*work themselves out*"—paint, varnish, etc., "*rub off*"—the best-made chairs will dislocate their arms—the strongest tables break or distort their legs; whilst other objects, too cowardly for self-inflictions, but equally perverse in spirit, will choose the very moment when their presence would be most desirable, to "*get lost*;" that is to say, to hide in some out-of-the-way corner, to which no living soul has ever had access, and, in which, consequently, no member of the family would ever think of looking.

I appeal to the general experience and phraseology of my countrywomen, as to the common occurrence of such household "*facts*," and the implied existence of those latent material energies, which, as comprised in the personifications "*NOBODY*," are virtually acknowledged, without a moment's hesitation.

Now, if under the *best* and most salutary influences, "*THINGS*" will occasionally make secret or overt attempts to get the upper-hand—of what rebellious demonstrations or chaotic efforts are not they likely to be guilty, where every superior governing power is absent or asleep; and where, if *they* do not, in some measure, attend to themselves and to each other, it is morally certain that no one else will? And what "*things*" are capable of, thus unrestrained, none but an eye-witness can appreciate! The ingenuity, the activity, the eccentricity, and, alas! the malignity of their actions—are alike astounding and incomprehensible!

"*In a Muddle*," the most valuable china will not only "*fall down of its own accord*" (*that*, as we have seen, may be expected of it *anywhere*), but it will previously *climb up* to some tremendous elevation, that it may aggravate its own destruction by that of all the yet simple-minded and able-bodied crockery beneath, thereby multiplying tenfold injury and annoyance to its owners. In the same spirit, though in an opposite direction, useless, lumbering articles, *always kept* at the very top of the house, will get down any number of stairs, or flights of stairs, in order to seek out low company in the kitchen; or to endanger the life or limb of every inmate of the dwelling, by placing themselves, with unblushing effrontery, in a passage. Keys will shake off their rings and get out of your very pockets, to crawl beneath the hearth-rug or leap into the dust-bin. Pitchers, notoriously dry whenever you had approached them to obtain only "a drop of water," will find out the nearest pump and there get filled, "too full"—rather than lose an opportunity of watering the bed-room floors, as if mustard-and-cress salads were to spring up from the carpets. Cruets, salt-cellars, and decanters, mock the thoughtful housewife, who is "continually replenishing them:" by, as perseveringly, discharging their contents: whilst shirts and other garments, "put away on Saturday night, without a single stitch or fastening wanting," and naturally expected to be fit for wear on Sunday morning, will actually get up again in the dead silence of the night, and proceed to distant drawers and wardrobes, that they may enjoy the malignant satisfaction of pulling off each other's strings and buttons.

That such are the common contrivances and pervers-

sities of which most things are found guilty, under a domestic anarchy, is asserted by all the mis-called heads of these comfortless establishments; so that the explanation offered by the Magician is, after all, virtually accepted by those chiefly interested in it, and may be considered as correct by others. And, right charitable will it be to give it credence and circulation; for, if the agency and responsibility of inanimate objects are to be denied, we renounce the sole theory capable of absolving so many responsible persons from the various misdemeanours of which they stand accused, and the still more unjustifiable falsehoods, of which, if *things* are *not* to blame, their *owners* must remain convicted.



CHAPTER V.

"A MUDDLE."—Likeness between various possessions and their possessors.—A visit to married friends after a few years' absence.—Waiting outside and inside the door.—Furniture and forlorn look of the drawing-room.—Change in the habits and appearance of the host and hostess.—Long-delayed and uncomfortable dinner.—Ultimate effects of Muddle upon the most affectionate natures and the warmest friendships.

It has long been my belief—a belief that I am proud to share with the most popular author of the age—that the dispositions, nay, even words and thoughts of the inhabitants of every locality, have a power to impress their character on the inanimate objects by which they are surrounded; so that possessions gradually acquire a sympathetic likeness to their possessors, sufficient, not only to remind old acquaintances of the familiar forms and faces inseparably connected with them, but to give to entire strangers, otherwise unprepared, an unerring sense and foretaste of the kind of persons they may expect to enter. In some cases, indeed, this connection between houses and their inmates appears so close, that it is difficult to realize the possibility of an abode being occupied by different tenants, or to fancy that certain individuals could comfortably exist elsewhere, or surrounded by any other objects than those which have grown so like them.

How this idea takes hold of our imaginations in the dwellings of the best and most benevolent members of "the Society of Friends," where all is at once so

simple and so good, so substantial and so well-assorted, so fit for daily use, and, evidently, so gently used, enjoyed, and cared for! How naturally do we expect the kind, calm smile, the heartily-proffered hospitality, the intellectual conversation, the practical good sense and Christian charity of the host and hostess of such an establishment! How difficult to suppose them clad in gaudy fashion, or in the dust and time-soiled garments we observe on other individuals! What but a cap and kerchief, still more delicate than they, could be discovered near the folds of those clear and spotless curtains; or, what but the best-appointed umbrella and most available goloshes could ever cross that mat, and find a corner in the well-kept entrance!

And where the young and joyful pass their careless hours, how elastic are the boards they tread, how fresh and smiling every blossom they have left; and, hark to the disbelieving titter resounding from the walls, in answer to the experienced sigh of those who are young and gay no longer!

Who can be unconscious of the change of moral atmosphere as, turning from such haunts as these, he enters the still chamber, where the suffering and serious have lingered, where last farewells have been uttered in soul-rending anguish, or Death, with all its terrors, has been preferred to life?

The student, the gamester, the miser, the prodigal, the contented, the grumbler—all leave a feeling of their idiosyncrasy wherever they inhabit: how much more the victim of the baneful power that desolates our homes. Nay, where Muddle reigns, is evident before you enter the precincts she has made her own. The palings of the area—the steps leading to the door—the accumu-

lated dirt beneath the scraper—the unobliterated sloppings of milk and beer, poured forth as libations to the genius of the place—the graceless dippings of the soiled and ringless curtains—the quaint, perverse askew of the shabby, ill-fixed blinds—the ancient dust and modern streaks upon the scarcely-transparent window panes—all combine to mark out the ill-omened dwelling, and to impress the approaching visitor with an indistinct sense of some danger to be incurred by drawing nearer to a house, which looks as if it might be thrown out of its smeary windows at any moment. Take his place, gentle reader, look at “Muddle” for yourself, and tell the yet uninitiated what you there behold.

You knock *or* ring—then knock *and* ring—once, twice, and thrice; and if, when weary of the examination of the impenetrable street door, you resort for amusement to the passers by, and distinguish amongst them some more familiar with the neighbourhood than you are, you will infallibly detect an aggravating smile of sympathy with this your patient waiting—a sort of “I wish you may get it, my good friend;”, which, as a tacit avowal that your chance of “getting it” is very small indeed, gives you the comfortable assurance that, long as you have already knocked and rung, you have still to knock and ring a great while longer. You cannot, however, conclude that these repeated announcements of your arrival have been wasted on an empty dwelling, nor that they have been altogether unheard or unheeded; for, at your every fresh performance on the musical instruments without, increased and increasing scuffling is as clearly to be perceived within, and this frequently in such close vicinity to the place of your endurance, followed by such hasty scuddings to a

greater distance, that you can only account for the continued delay in admitting you, by the occurrence of a succession of sudden and untoward accidents that might render the presence of a friend peculiarly desirable.

At length, and just as you have determined on departing from this dwelling of mysterious turmoil, to seek a readier entrance in a different quarter, the door is pulled violently backwards, as far as a muddy doormat will allow, and the monotony of waiting on the one side is varied by your being graciously permitted to remain waiting on the other.

Perhaps, it is a cleaning day; for, notwithstanding the small cleanliness for which Muddle is remarkable, there is frequently a vast amount of cleaning; and, if so, you will be made aware of the fact, by the presence of a handle-less dust-shovel, full of dirt and tea-leaves, either left carelessly upon the gritty floor, or placed carefully upon the wooden chair, on which, for want of something better, you would be too glad to sit. Hats, cloaks, clogs, and umbrellas, which, in every comfortable establishment, would be granted an "alibi" on sweeping day, are congregated near the dust-pan; nor can you be unedified, by observing what retributive justice is being exercised by every draught in the house, which, over the very bodies of the prostrate broom and duster, blows back the identical dust upon the identical objects to which it had belonged, before their audacious interference; whilst old domesticated spiders, dropping boldly from their heights along the cornice, look half-sneeringly, half-confidingly, upon the household weapons, elsewhere employed in their extermination, as if maid, and broom, and duster, were here bound over not to hurt them.

You wait yet longer, and, unless something of an anti-conservative yourself in these matters, you cannot help wishing for a little paste, as you would have ample leisure to repair sundry dilapidations in the passage-paper, which, for want of such timely care, is fast hastening to destruction, and speculate on each depending fragment, until, becoming fidgetty as well as weary, your unavailing good intentions on its behalf, give way to a certain nervous, childish inclination to follow the example of some younger fingers, and to pick off a little more.

But now, the uncouth maid to whom you had given your card, and to whom you had intrusted divers announcements of your business or pretensions, as she, ever and anon, disturbed your meditations by rushing down and up again—each descent and ascent being followed by such increased shufflings and flittings, suppressed callings and exclamations, and other sounds of collision, as give you the idea of a house full of short-sighted persons running against each other—this your only hope and messenger makes her last and most impetuous *avalanche* towards you, and, announcing that “master and mistress are coming in a moment,” you are shown into the sitting-room and requested to sit down and rest yourself.

Sit down and rest yourself! but, *where*? “Ah! there’s the rub.” Not on the sofa, certainly, although its dirty cover can’t be so very old; ’tis only this year’s pattern, and long white basting threads, with broken needles, as well as seams unsewn, bespeak it uncompleted! But yet, and O the grease! Now, truly, all that’s done of it was done by candlelight, and each enlightening “*mutton*” extinguished on its surface!

Or, has this devoted article, at any recent period, been left as the *only* piece of furniture, so that it has been eaten on and drunk on, and slept on and trampled on, and used and abused in every way?—No, decidedly, you cannot sit upon that sofa. Besides, if no regard to cleanliness withheld you, honour and delicacy would alike forbid; for, lo! from beneath its undulating squab, and, especially protruding from each gaping corner, what stores of heterogeneous matter, what sacred relics on which no stranger's eye should ever dwell,—some perhaps but lately stuffed away, in reference to yourself—what different objects and sentiments conspire to drive you from penetrating into the mysteries thus partially revealed, and to make you feel almost guilty for having turned your head that way. Sit down or rest upon that sofa! “’Tis flat burglary.” Paul Pry himself would hardly dare to do it, though he could prove his umbrella was behind it.

You turn then from the sofa to the easy chairs; but are equally at a loss in your selection; crumbs or bits of bread, nut-shells and orange-peel, in larger or smaller quantities, distinguishing the seats with cushions, as temporary pig-tubs, as clearly as the sofa had betrayed its being employed as parcel wardrobe, parcel clothes-bag. Feeling thus exceedingly uneasy concerning every easy chair, and unable to decide on which of the unarmed and uncushioned you will find the least dust and grease, you congratulate yourself on the discovery that there is one at the further end of the room, which is evidently held in more respect than its companions, and proceed to take possession. Happily, the sudden dropping of one of its supporting legs, as you remove it from the paint it has so cruelly defaced, shows you the

danger you might have incurred, had you rested upon its fair appearance, without further examination. A little anxious concerning the fractured member of your intended seat, but full of thankfulness to see it fall *alone*, you stick up the wooden limb again to the best of your ability, and, resigned to walk or stand a little longer, survey the other objects in the apartment.

The furniture is very likely expensive and in the recent fashion, the chimney-glass of extra size and value, the grates and ornaments such as bespeak a purchaser to whom money is of no consideration; and yet, all wears the same aspect of dirt and disorder that frightened you from chair and sofa; the *feeling* of an ill-kept broker's shop, rather than that of a family residence is around you; and the firmest table and prettiest chiffonier have a sort of "here to-day and away to-morrow" look about them, as if they belonged to anybody or nobody, and which can alone explain the remorseless injuries they have received in their frequent changes of abode. The mud-stained drugget, likewise, whose upturned corners discover a still dirtier carpet, which, again, from sundry unnailed portions, reveals long-hoarded gatherings of dust and flue—would seem to bear traces of such doubtful characters as may have carried off the missing poker, put the grimy hearth-broom up the chimney, broken the china ornaments, and tucked behind picture frames and card-cases, very ominous and incendiary-like documents, calculated to inspire a painful fear as to what company or calamity your friends can have got into since last you met. You seek to divert your thoughts by taking up a daily journal; it has evidently not only entertained your friends at breakfast, but had its own uncalled-for share in the repast. Egg, bacon, coffee,

butter,—remain so conspicuous on its surface, that you can only suppose it to have served as table-napkin, and, loath to soil your last kid gloves with further contact, you throw it on the chaos of books and newspapers from which you had disentangled it, and leave it for a future meal.

At last the door is opened, and your solitude is at an end; and, if those for whom you have thus waited are endeared to you by the ties of relationship or friendship, or associated with fond and early recollections, you forget all but their presence in this reunion, sit down with them on the bumpy greasy sofa, equally oblivious of clothes or comfort, and interchange those eager heartfelt looks and words, for which no written correspondence can make up, and which Muddle itself cannot, *at first*, destroy.

The victims of domestic confusion are often, indeed, by nature, kind-hearted, hospitable persons; and, if those you have sought are such, you will be unable to resist their earnest endeavours to detain you; but, resigning your outer garments to their keeping, you will submit to a farther initiation into the mysteries and miseries of their peculiar way of life.

Alas! no sooner has the pleasurable excitement of your meeting in some degree subsided, than you read in the costume, the manner, and the countenances of your friends, how disqualifying, how deteriorating it must be. The period elapsed since you were last together is not so very long; it has left but little trace on others, but *here* what a change is visible! Where is the youth, the freshness, the ingenuousness that you remember? whence the look of care and harass, of uncertain or insufficient means,—of second-hand, ill-fitting clothes,

—of want of wholesome air and diet,—of a nature sunk and sinking, that rivets your observation and strikes terror to your heart,—in persons who should be in far more favourable circumstances than you are yourself, and whose monthly expenditure is very likely greater than the annual income of many who live in health, and peace, and comfort. That fair and pretty girl, whose glossy curling hair and spotless dress, with all its lady-like appointments, had, under her mother's care, so well assorted with her look of prosperous love and chastened happiness!—can the marriage that was to crown her dearest hopes, and the few short years that should but have matured her charms,—can these have transformed her into the graceless, care-worn drudge before you? And is that pitiable object by her side her once handsome, bright, and intellectual lover? What mean that mingled expression of anxiety and recklessness, those stooping shoulders and that shambling gait, that harsh discordant voice, that half-convulsive seeking after falling buttons and an absent handkerchief, and the constant, painful sniffing, which makes you long to proffer the one you have not yet unfolded? Is this your friend or your friend's husband? are these the handsomest and happiest couple of your acquaintance? Alas! for the unholy work of MUDDLE, for such they really *were*.

As the fearful change is realised, you more than half repent the having consented to remain, and yearn after the freedom of your own cheerful and comfortable home, to weep over the moral mist that hangs over and defaces theirs. Also, as the dinner hour approaches, and the hostess, "on hospitable cares intent," leaves you to the society of your host; and your host himself,

after sundry callings to, and callings back of the different helps and hindrances in the house, is demanded for a moment's audience, and returns in evident perplexity, you can no longer avoid feeling partly guilty of this confusion. Accordingly you protest against the trouble you are giving, and lay violent hands upon your outer garments; nor, until greater violence has been exercised upon your heart and understanding, as to "the affliction your absence would occasion, no difference being made on your account, your obligation to feel quite at home, the uncertainty of ever meeting again," and so forth, do you, once more, resign yourself to the expressed wishes of your friends.

The dinner hour is now long past, and yet, no visible sign of preparation is made in the room in which you are; and, as your having to dine in that room was one of the tranquillizing facts brought forward to prove you should not be made a stranger of, you suppose that dinner must be here or nowhere. In other parts of the dwelling, however, great preparations must be going on; repeated callings of the maid and seekings of the mistress, huntings up and down, pulling out and knocking down of heavy articles, slamming of doors, etc., continue and increase; whilst your own consciousness, that you would rather dine off bread and cheese, than give a moment's extra trouble, renders a bustle sufficient to procure entertainment for the chief magistrate of London, most painful as well as incomprehensible. Bread and cheese would have contented you; and this your old friends should know as well as you do. Bread and cheese! dear, happy, uninitiated! why, it is, in all probability, the sudden discovery of the want of bread itself, just as dinner should have been served up, which

has thus delayed it, as the recollection that there is no cheese, just when dinner should be cleared away, will keep the sodden pudding on the table, whilst something scarcely eatable is fetched from the nearest chandler's shop.

Time, that "waits for no man," will certainly go on in spite of all the women in a house; and, if what you have just witnessed has somewhat damped your appetite, you will, nevertheless, be sensible of that peculiar "sinking," which, after a long fast, after a long walk, usurps its place, and you begin to regret the obstinate refusal of the wine and biscuit, which, with the prospect of dining "almost directly," you had naturally declined. "Hope on, hope ever;" for now, one very dirty female, of the class of charwomen, comes in with a very dirty cloth, and is proceeding to sprinkle it with various specimens of cutlery, when another very dirty female—even your old acquaintance, the maid—rushes in after her in dismay, snatches off the cloth but just put on, and replaces it with a second, innocent, indeed, of the last month's grease and gravy; but wearing equally the greyish livery of all around you, and more particularly and lately signed by the coal-black hands that brought it.

The lady now re-enters, her last absence being accounted for by a striking change of costume; but the draggled petticoat, you had before remarked, is retained to hang an inch below the hem of her dress-gown, and her transparent chemisette makes awkward discovery of the sadly dingy stays her morning-wrap had hidden. Shortly after this, dinner is actually served, the chops, steaks, or cutlets, being considered burnt enough, and the potatoes underdone enough, to

make their appearance ; whilst the plates, being entirely an afterthought, having no connection with the dishes, come in to procure you the cold dinner, of which the fearful efforts of the last three hours were intended to deprive you.

You eat with what relish you can command—your hostess, during the whole meal, jumping up and down to look for such usual accompaniments of the table-cloth, as long custom had made you fancy could never have been absent ; but which here only arrive after you have contrived to do without them.

Vexed with yourself, and sorry for your friends, you reiterate your apologies for the trouble you have given ; and are again repeatedly assured that they have not made the slightest difference on your account, nor been put out of their usual routine in any way !

Alas ! you may too readily believe them ; for similar or worse confusion forms their daily and their hourly life—a confusion resulting from the baneful influences that banish household comfort, and deaden intellect ; and that, in a few years hence, will succeed in destroying those warm and kindly feelings of the heart which still render old friends willing even to brave “ a muddle,” for the sake of the dear ones in it.

At no very distant period, you will, in all probability, be left uninvited and unvisited, and the long and ardent friendship, once professed and entertained for you, will become, like most of the *acknowledged* possessions in such establishments, a something that must certainly be somewhere ; but which is nowhere and never to be found.



CHAPTER VI.

THE PRECEDING PICTURE OF "A MUDDLE" GIVES BUT A FAINT IDEA OF WHAT "MUDDLES" ARE IN GENERAL.—That it is destitute of all the worst components of domestic confusion, such as sickness, babies, washing-days, etc.—Also, no daily visitor can fully understand what "a Muddle" appears to those who remain over night. The Author "owns the soft impeachment," and confesses herself incapable of presenting to her readers an exact likeness of "Muddle" at its worst.—The portrait she has given is calculated nevertheless to warn the inexperienced against the fatal effects of harbouring their domestic enemy.

THE author is quite prepared to find, that, whereas the few who know nothing but neatness and regularity in the sphere in which they move, will condemn the picture in the former chapter as "fearfully exaggerated"—others, less fortunate but more experienced, will reject it as, "not nearly bad enough;" the least obnoxious Muddle ever heard of, and destitute of the chief elements that constitute its evil nature. What, in fact, is a Muddle without sickness, poverty, or young children, or all that has a natural affinity to disorder and confusion, and that furnishes its most aggravating circumstances?

Besides, let a day or daily visitor be ever so acute an observer, what can be learnt of the mysteries of Muddle by any one who does not stay in her abodes all night? Who that has not had this advantage, can fancy what it is to be left in a bell-less room, without water, soap, or towel; or, how is the genius of the place to be

looked at in the proper light or darkness, by any one who has not been appointed to a greasy, snufferless candlestick, with "an end," just long enough to fire the paper round it, before the hapless individual is half undressed; so that he is fain to extinguish the conflagration with his fingers, and then to grope his way to bed. And *what* a bed! How can persons who go home to sleep in comfort, divine what those must feel who, even *if* honoured with fresh and well-aired sheets, are stretched on bumps and lumps, more likely to be composed of ducks and geese entire, or scrupulously plucked, than of any softer or more elastic material in the world?

What just idea can be formed of Muddle, from a description, in which its chief elements and worst accompaniments are studiously kept out of sight?

Ah! dear and gentle reader! forgive me, if, with "the ingenuous Mrs. Malaprop, '*I own the soft impeachment*;' " for truly, my description *is* a feeble one; and I honestly confess to want of courage—want of words—and want of patience to furnish a portrait of a Muddle, such as it often is or may be. I cannot open to the eyes of general observers, the retirement of a Muddler's bed-room. I scarcely dare insinuate to more refined olfactories, the combinations in her nursery. I have not voice to whisper what is done or not done in kitchen or in wash-house, and I have neither head nor heart to calculate what such discomfort costs! But I offer this imperfect sketch to those who are *not yet* paralysed by their own domestic confusion and degradation; and I conjure them, by all the blessings of a home of happiness, to observe and lay to heart, what, in others, excites their compassion or disgust; and

then, to watch over every defect in their own character, which may leave *them* also one day, without the pale of social comfort and enjoyment, objects of despairing pity and of unwilling but enforced neglect.



CHAPTER VII.

PEDIGREE OF "MUDDLE;" FAMILY CONNECTIONS; SIGNS OF THEIR APPROACH.—The position of this chapter justified by a consideration of the ordinary progress of making acquaintances.—Encroaching disposition of "Muddle's" kith and kin.—Appeal to young housekeepers to consider the immense value of the deposits committed to their charge.—Warning as to the defects in their principles and conduct by means of which "Muddle" and her baneful crew obtain admittance.

THE appearance of the present chapter here, rather than at the commencement of her book, will, perhaps, be considered as a considerable mistake on the part of the author, and probably remind such readers as have travelled, of the feelings of surprise with which, *after* having partaken of the "potage," "bouilli," vegetables and poultry of a continental dinner, they regarded the entrance of the *fish*! Fish after fowl! Pedigree and family connections after particular description! Would anybody ever dream of such a thing? How exceedingly unnatural! this term, however, having no more reference to Dame Nature herself, and her primitive ordinances and instigations, than the last "surpassing outfits of Moses and Son" may bear to the first rude garments of the original inhabitants of our island, when tailors were unknown. But these and similar anomalies are unnatural, in regard to that "use" which is our second and stronger nature, and which, not only revolts from all that is contrary to its expectations, but refuses to listen to the reasons that may justify the habits or second nature of our neighbours. And yet other rea-

sons, besides those by which we ourselves are actuated, do certainly exist, and very reasonable reasons too, and it is as certainly incumbent on the wise and candid to grant them due attention.

To such, then, as would not cavil at a good dinner, because the fish, in its costly element of wine sauce, swam in later than was expected, the author will venture a few words concerning the unusual sequence of her chapters.

In making her readers acquainted with their most insidious enemy, she has endeavoured to follow the more general course of making acquaintances in the world; and not, as in catechisms of the arts and sciences, to furnish the student with the result of observation and research, independently of the steps previously taken, and the manner in which discoveries have been made. In biographies of individuals long dead and gone, and who cannot come across our path in any way, it may be very advisable to adopt the received custom of disinterring the pedigrees and peculiarities of their ancestors, or their ancestors' seventh cousins, before any more personal distinctions are alluded to. But Muddle, my dear readers, is no more dead and gone than you are; on the contrary, she is as much a living inhabitant of your neighbourhood, as 'any Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Jones of the particular street, crescent, terrace, circus, square, or paragon, in which you are severally located; and, inasmuch as you will never guess upon what distinguished branches of their wide-spreading genealogical trees, these worthy ladies are engrafted, by the flowers or feathers in their Sunday bonnets, but will first learn the interesting particulars of their family connections, when intimate enough to put on your own

caps before their looking-glasses, when you go to take a friendly cup of tea with them—so I think myself justified in placing Muddle's parentage after the earlier chapters in my volume.

If you will trace *your* intimacies to and from their origin, I think you will remember that you began by observing the general appearance of your neighbours' houses and "turns out;" then *heard* of some of their unaccountable peculiarities within; in due course, obtained a clue, by which you fancied you could account for the unaccountable; but only after having made personal acquaintance with them, could you acquire any certain information as to who were their kith or kin, or decide upon their claims to virtue or respectability. Now, my dear young readers, I have endeavoured to show you the character of Muddle in the self-same way, and may reasonably hope that a desire of adapting myself to your own movements, will never be a reason why we should part company. Let so much suffice for the position of my chapter—proceed we to its purport.

In the old allegorical style, Muddle might be identified as descended from the ancient but *dishonourable* family of Chaos; the child of INDIFFERENCE and WANT OF PRINCIPLE; educated alternately by DAWDLING-HURRY, STUPIDITY, OBSTINACY, MEANNESS, and EXTRAVAGANCE; secretly united at an early age to SELF-CONCEIT; and parent of PROCRASTINATION, FALSEHOOD, DIRT, WASTE, DISORDER, DESTRUCTION, AND DESOLATION.

Certain it is, that her connections are, on all sides so disreputable—and her disposition to introduce and to establish them, wherever she is herself admitted, is so notorious—that nothing but a blind and continued neg-

ligence on the one hand, and persevering watchfulness and sly gradual encroachment on the other, can account for the number of, otherwise, respectable families, in which she has obtained admittance. Did she venture to come openly, she would doubtless be as openly dismissed; but, unhappily, she is seldom recognised as an inmate, until she has appropriated the whole establishment to herself and family; and, until those who should have prevented her approach, are amongst her most strenuous supporters, wearing her peculiar badge, and designated after her familiar name. Few are “Muddlers” at the commencement of their career, many are “Muddlers” ere the end!

O! ye dear young HOUSEKEEPERS! ye who are so called in remembrance that all that is valuable, and “lovely, and of good report,” in house and home, is intrusted to your care and keeping—look to it, *from the beginning* of your married life, that the artful foe of all your future years do not rob you of your great reward! Look to it, for one or other of her baneful crew is ever on the watch to enter and to give her entrance. They will have their spies about you, even in your bridal tiring-room! and, reckoning upon turning both the good and evil in your characters to their own advantage and advancement, the hopeless confusion of your house and heart will be their object, even from your wedding-day.

Would you learn the unerring signs that mark the coming of the destroyers of your household peace? Consider well the following, and then—beware!

BEWARE! when, having been prevented by some favourite pursuit from putting things into their proper places, or performing duties at their proper hours, you assert, against your better judgment, that the things had

better remain where casualty has placed them, and that the duties may be *just as well* performed at any other time: Muddle's old parents, Indifference and Want of Principle, are close at hand; young housekeepers, beware!

When, for want of an object of small cost, but of daily utility, time and patience are unnecessarily expended, and articles of greater value are exposed to injury; young housekeepers, beware! Extravagance and Meanness, disguised in the cast-off garments of economy, have obtained possession of your ear, and hope, one day, to have the education of your family.

When you and your female servants, in the natural indulgence of your naturally "unruly members," take as much, or more time, in settling what *is* to be had or done, than would suffice to procure or to perform it; young housekeepers, beware! Stupidity and Dawdling are in attendance, and are watching for their opportunity to bandage close your eyes, and tie your hands behind you.

When, engrossed by the excitement, the endearments, and the prospects of newly-married life—its mental and sentimental enjoyments and advantages make you forgetful, perhaps contemptuous, concerning the corporeal necessities and appearance of yourself and husband; **YOUNG HOUSEKEEPERS, BEWARE!** Muddle herself has looked in upon your retirement, and will take her place in your establishment, before the expiration of your honeymoon.

When, unable to deny the defects in your character and management, you not only consider advice and advisers impertinent and disagreeable, but shrink from the casual mention of any who are worthier or better housewives than yourselves, and silence your reprovers

and your conscience with the assertion, that, "*No one*, situated like yourself, could possibly do better;" young housekeepers, beware!—Self-conceit, Falsehood, and Want of Principle, are adopted as relations, and Muddle looks forward to the triumphant moment when *her* husband shall be of more importance to you than *your* husband; and her whole family and their interests shall be accounted infinitely more precious than your own!



CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHARACTERS THAT MAKE BAD HOUSEWIVES.—The world, notwithstanding its remaining imperfections, has outlived some of its former prejudices.—One of these, a belief that clever women are necessarily inefficient housekeepers, or that those who are inferior in other respects are *therefore* exemplary wives and mothers. It is not *the possession* of superior ability, but *the want* of certain qualifications, without which ability can avail nothing, that brings “Muddle” into families.—These qualifications—AN INSTINCTIVE PERCEPTION OF COMFORT, JUDGMENT, ENERGY, and, above all, CHRISTIAN CONSCIENTIOUSNESS.

WHENEVER the perversities and prejudices of each succeeding day allow us breathing-time, and magazine and “wonder-makers” are full of thought how they may best fill up their promised columns, it is a frequent, and by no means, contemptible resource, to draw upon the perversities and prejudices of our ancestors, and to furnish lists of obsolete extravagances which soothingly insinuate that the world, however far removed from perfect wisdom, is not so silly as it was. The increase of general virtue may be dubious; but the decrease of certain follies is indubitable. We no longer make bonfires of witches, nor bugbears of eclipses; whatever may be the ordeal of our present courts of law, we have no more Trials by Ordeal; and we look back upon these and similar peculiarities of the ages in which they were permitted, much as a young person of sixteen recalls the curious things he thought and did when only six, and with very little consideration of what

sixty years may think of the opinions and actions of sixteen. It is evident to us that the world we live in has outgrown its childhood; and, although in the paroxysms of brain fever, to which it has all its life been subject, it is occasionally guilty of absurdity and violence, equal to any manifested in its earliest infancy, such outbreaks belong to its disease, and not to its general principles and practice, when in the enjoyment of its usual health. And the Christian who is wise to see in everything "the lovingkindness of the Lord," will gratefully observe that the poor feverish world is not abandoned in its hour of need. Oh, no! its Almighty Maker and Physician watches over its delirium; He has patience with its waywardness, medicine for its disorders, and mercy on its whole existence, and when again restored to health and calmness, and candidly compared with what it was before its last attack, we find some crying evil checked, some latent good developed; and we add to the increasing catalogue of *former* prejudices and errors, many of the cherished fancies of our own generation and remembrance.

Amongst some of these popular mistakes that I am myself outliving, is the idea that women distinguished by their literary or scientific attainments are, *necessarily*, untidy in their persons, or inefficient in their house-keeping; whilst those destitute of information or accomplishments, are, *on that account*, certain to be orderly and industrious, the best wives and mothers in the world, and the least likely to bring themselves or their belongings into a muddle. Where the instances existed which must have given rise to such an opinion, I cannot learn; the experience of my own circle of friends being entirely against its truth, and even the few who

yet cling to the union of mental ability and domestic stupidity, as the rule, are obliged to acknowledge so many bright exceptions, that, like "the ingenuous Mrs. Malaprop," from whom I have already quoted, "their arguments are chiefly to the advantage of their opponents." Indeed, I think I may confidently appeal to general and particular observation, whether the hostess, in whose company her guests have yawned the most, has given them the best-appointed dinners; or, if the women most equal to be the friends and companions of their husbands, and instructresses to their children, have been the least successful housekeepers? I ask all to remember, not the opinions they have heard, but the facts and families that they have seen; and then I believe they will have no difficulty in coming to the following conclusion: that—

Disorder and distress are *not* brought into a household by the *presence* of intellect and talent in its mistress; but by the *absence* of certain qualities and virtues, without which, neither knowledge nor ability can avail to secure happiness.

The women who bring Muddle into their husbands' hearts and homes, are such as want:—

First. That instinctive sense of comfort and propriety, which, like a genial sun or purer atmosphere, causes the meanest things beneath its influence, to look cheerful and agreeable; part and parcel of the undefined sentiments of peace and pleasure that take possession of our being, as we move and rest amongst them. Oh, more than magic wand or fairy talisman, this truly feminine endowment! The maiden who can bring it as her portion, will need no other dowry! The humblest parlour into which she enters will shine like

an enchanted palace—the dreariest prison cell, if visited by her transforming touch, will reflect a feeling of the comfortable parlour. Wherever this sweet household charm approaches, thence poverty and melancholy fly; wherever it is wanting, there ruin and dejection dwell.

It must, however, be conceded, in regard to persons who have not this sense, that they are in the enjoyment of so large a proportion of negative felicity, that, independently of their connection with natures more refined, they would be enviable beings. As no cleanliness rejoices them, so no lack of it annoys them; if no arrangement contributes to their comfort, no disorder can in any way disturb it. To all that rouses the indignation, tasks the energies, or offends the organs of housekeepers in general, or gives the more particular and sensitive “the fidgets,” they are perfectly insensible. If rooms are never swept, or beds are never shaken, to *them* “it does not signify;” if milk is burnt, or water smoked, or soot and soup are ladled out together, “*they* don’t taste anything;” if gowns are torn and spotted, hats dusty and unbrushed, and jackets out at elbows, “*they* never would have noticed it;” and if any one place or one thing is more unsuitable, inconvenient, or injurious than another, that, as far as *their* feelings are concerned, and, for aught that *they* can see, is “just as good as the best.” Certainly, if freedom from personal annoyance is a blessing, such persons have generally the best of it.

Very curious is it to observe what different characters, in other respects, are subject to this same indifference or recklessness. The ardent schoolboy, the abstracted student; the lively romp, the apathetic dawdle; the very rich, the very poor; the very strong, the very

weak; the very young, the very old; the famous and the infamous; the clever and the stupid; those whose heads and hearts are very full, and those whose heads and hearts are very empty,—may all be found in the family circle of the “Good-enoughs;” some, indeed, being destined to leave it hereafter for more exacting company, but others to remain in it for ever. Certain it is that, wherever a determined “Good-enough” is *in office*, all under such king-Log government becomes “too bad for anything.”

Secondly. **WANT OF JUDGMENT**, and, especially of that branch of judgment distinguished as “the power of putting two ideas together,” is another striking characteristic of the persons who are always “in a muddle.”

So many circumstances occur, which we can neither anticipate nor control, and which require a modification of our actions, corresponding to the unforeseen emergency, that a person who is incapable of qualifying idea No. 1, to match with idea No. 2, will often do more mischief with the one idea than if actually destitute of any. Now, most of a woman's occupations, if they are to be creditably performed, demand a combination of *several* ideas, and a prompt combination too; and the housewife who is incapable of this, must frequently be in difficulty and distress, overwhelmed by all she should direct or conquer, and unable to fulfil her more general and easy duties by the accumulations left from yesterdays of extra thought and care.

The woman who wants **JUDGMENT** will always be “in a muddle.”

Thirdly. **WANT OF ENERGY** is another great and common cause of the want of domestic comfort. As the best-laid fire can give no heat and cook no food, unless

it is lighted ; so the clearest ideas and purest intentions will produce no corresponding actions, without that energy which gives power to all that is of value, which is, as it were, the very life of life, and which is never more necessary or available than in the mistress and mother of a family. Those who have it not, and many are constitutionally destitute of it, would do well to inquire of their experience and their conscience, what compensating virtues they can bring into the marriage state to justify them in entering on its duties without that which is so essential to their performance. They should consider that the pretty face and graceful languor, which, as it is often especially attractive to the most impetuous of the other sex, gained them *ardent lovers*, will not enable them to satisfy the innumerable requisitions and to secure the social happiness of the *fidgetty and exacting husbands*, into which characters ardent and impetuous lovers are generally transformed. Let them take warning from those examples amongst their acquaintances, where love and laziness had been the bride's only contributions towards housekeeping, which of the passions conquered? for the coexistence of both, for long together, is impossible. Alas! the love too speedily departed ; the indolence gained strength. Is *their* love of the kind that has conquered and must conquer, or is their indolence the victorious power? If the latter, their fate, as married women, is but to swell the melancholy number whose sole vocation in the world appears to be to add to its misery and children, either to sink under responsibilities too great for them, or to survive in helpless vegetation, the scorn of all who should respect them, the aversion of those by whom

they should be loved and cherished. Surely it would be better for themselves, as well as their connections, that such women should yawn and dawdle on in "single blessedness," adding perhaps beneficially to the moral *vis inertiae* in the world, for want of which the more energetic part thereof must fly off into space indefinite, than that they should found additional establishments for Muddle, and bring fresh victims to her altars.

Fourthly. But, valuable as the above-named qualifications are, and baneful as their absence must be in domestic life, there is a virtue far more powerful than they—a virtue that, whilst it *can* supply the place of other salutary influences, can be replaced by none; I mean A LIVING CHRISTIAN CONSCIENTIOUSNESS, and that sincere and practical devotion to the objects of affection which leaves the heart *no rest* so long as aught is unperformed that could tend to their happiness or welfare.

A LIVING CHRISTIAN CONSCIENTIOUSNESS! who shall set limits to its power, who shall enumerate its conquests? Evil habits, dear and besetting sins, the strongest passions and inclinations of our nature; nay, that very nature itself, if contrary to "the law written in our hearts," must yield beneath the grace freely vouchsafed to all who earnestly desire to know what is right, and practise it, "such as remember the Lord's commandments to do them."

My dear young friends! see here the true defender of your household peace. In THE HUMILITY, THE TRUTH, THE TEACHABLENESS, THE MODERATION, THE PURITY, THE PERSEVERANCE, that ever follow in her train, behold the domestic garrison which can alone

repel the attacks of your great enemy. *With* these you are safe and happy from your wedding to your dying day. *Without* them, you are lost and wretched, and Muddle reigns triumphant.



CHAPTER IX.

FORBEARANCE AND CHARITABLE FEELINGS WITH WHICH THE VICTIMS OF "MUDDLE" SHOULD BE REGARDED.—The author wishes to make her readers more alive to the causes and consequences of domestic confusion than ever they were before; but *not* to render them harsh in their judgments of friend or relative, whom they may find in an occasional or even in a continual "Muddle."—The existence of a physical and moral depression, of which youth and strength can form no adequate idea, a blameless, though most melancholy cause of domestic disorder and unhappiness.—The unknowing touch of man should not aggravate the sufferings that are from the hand of God.—Youthful energies to be employed in restoring comfort to the houses of those who are broken in nerves and spirits; youthful severity to be reserved for such personal defects as may bring upon the thoughtless or indolent heavier and merited censure.

I HAVE now nearly accomplished the first part of my allotted task, and shall have laboured to very little purpose, if the young candidates for domestic happiness, on whose behalf it was chiefly undertaken, are not infinitely more alive to the presence and characteristics of their deadly household enemy than they ever were before. It is to be hoped and to be expected, that every cause and consequence of the intrusion and harbouring of MUDDLE, in the different families into which they are admitted, will be, henceforth, subjects of serious consideration and useful warning; and that, profiting by their observations of what is *wrong* in others, they will, in their more immediate circle, promote the im-

provement of society by the far more agreeable method of setting an example of what is *right*.

But whilst it is my intention and desire that they should narrowly observe, and zealously shun Muddle, I would most earnestly and affectionately caution them against any uncharitable remark, or any uncharitable thought, concerning her unhappy victims. Especially let them beware of supposing that every one whom they may surprise in occasional disorder, is naturally and habitually neglectful, and deserving of their censure yet more than their commiseration. This is far from being the case; for in common with almost every other evil, domestic confusion may be unjustifiably brought upon us by ourselves, or it may be sadly brought upon us by circumstances and afflictions, over which we can have no control, and of which the young and inexperienced can form little or no idea. Long may they be ignorant of this melancholy state of things, from their own individual experience; but, that they may remain exempt, let them show by their gentle dealings with the infirmities of others, that they require no personal discipline to give them a full understanding of the misery they view. Long may the failing health, the crushed spirits, the exhausted energy, the pinching want, the "carking care," which, eating into heart and brain, render disorder unavoidable, be kept from their persons and their families; but, whilst they are so, let them look most tenderly on all who are, or may be, suffering from these wearing and disturbing influences.

Yes, my dear young friends, whatever else there may be found deficient in the households into which you enter, let not your Christian charity be wanting!

Of unexpected arrivals and departures, of the sudden

accumulation of events and consequent press of occupation, and of seasons of illness and calamity, calculated to produce and to excuse confusion anywhere, you all probably know something; but besides all this, and far more deserving of your tenderest compassion, there is a prostration of physical and moral strength, to which poor human nature is sometimes liable, and of which the yet untried can form no adequate conception, which renders exertion impossible, in proportion as it is most necessary, and causes an apparently inexplicable disorder to be denounced as inexcusable.

Yet, could the censurers change places with the censured, how differently would they judge a state for which they show no pity! Who shall describe its wretchedness? The head wanders, the heart sinks, the nerves tremble—"the grasshopper becomes a burden,"—molehills appear like mountains, and all that, to the fresh and vigorous, is of easy and pleasurable performance, lies upon the morbid system, like an incubus, incapacitating for every exertion, and rendering any amelioration of the evil accumulating around, hopeless and impracticable.

This afflictive situation, from which none can insure exemption, is from the correcting hand of the Almighty. Let not the unknowing and harsh touch of man wantonly aggravate its misery; rather should the elastic spirits and unbroken energies which prevent its being fully understood, be employed to remove the pressure of duties unfulfilled, and to restore order and comfort to the establishment of the afflicted.

But, if the removal or alleviation of the wretchedness you pity, is out of your province or your power, you are the more bound to regard it with indulgence, re-

serving the severity of your judgment for those failings in your own character, which, if not corrected in time, may bring worse calamity and censure on yourselves.

Renounce, abhor, and be perseveringly hostile to the enemy, of whose insidious arts I warn you ; but oh ! be gentle, be pitiful, be courteous, to Muddle's unhappy victims.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

INTERLUDE.

MUDDLE OF ORDER.

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THE domestic deficiencies in the daughter's house singularly but *justly* accounted for by her having seen *nothing* but the strictest cleanliness and order in her mother's family.—Cleanliness and order, good things; Christian charity and happiness still better: the former should therefore be servants, the latter masters. Where this order is reversed, there is a moral confusion worse than any mere material "Muddle" can be.—Miserable condition of persons who *belong* to their houses and furniture, and consider every human being and human enjoyment subservient to the undue care and preservation of their idolized treasures.—The possibility of a rational and charitable domestic discipline, beneath which every comfort is increased, and every one feels happy and at home.—This chapter, having a tendency to prove that the author does not mean to be too particular, her readers are invited to the perusal of the second part of her subject.

AMONGST other apparently contradictory assertions presented to our belief in the dwellings of discomfort, a careless and untidy daughter will not unfrequently declare that her mother was one of the most particular persons in existence, and that, up to the period of her marriage; she had never seen *anything* but the strictest order, cleanliness, and economy! This, as a striking instance of cause and *defect*, is apt to call forth a portion of that "respectful doubt," with which, alas! so many assertions must be listened to; and yet, as "too

much of a good thing" *is*, proverbially, "good for nothing," and the tendency of one extreme is generally to produce its opposite, the untidy daughter may be literally credited, when she brings forward her having seen *nothing* but the strictest order, cleanliness, etc., in her mother's family, as reason for the unrestrained disorder and neglect prevailing in her own.

The fact is, that, although cleanliness and order are *good* things, Christian Charity and its attendant Happiness are *better*. Cleanliness and Order, therefore, should be but servants in the household ; Christian Charity and Happiness should rule and govern them ; but, if what is intended to be subservient to higher powers, is established as an idol to which these are continually sacrificed, it is no wonder that the perverted good should fall into disrepute, and be forsaken as speedily as possible.

The mistaking the means for the end, which is so common, is always a fatal error. It is "the cart before the horse," and nothing but an entire stand-still, or the painful exercise of great energies to little purpose, can ever be expected from it. That which might easily be drawn by the horse, *before* the cart, will scarcely be moved by all his kicking and plunging, *behind*, nor will any persevering efforts, by which, at last, the cart may be pushed *over*, ever avail to push it *on*.

Cleanliness and order are, then, only desirable, when employed as a *means* of promoting the comfort and sweet temper of the family ; when they are *the end* proposed, and maintained at the expense of the harmless ease and Christian cordiality, which really constitute *a home*—the house in which these virtues *reign*, is, virtually, in more confusion, than any from which they are excluded.



Of what advantage is it, indeed, that every chair is in its proper place, and at its proper angle—that your face is reflected from the polished furniture around, and not a speck of dust appears on cloth or carpet—if reproofs, and discontented looks, and anxious watchings are ever in your way, and you hardly dare to move for fear of “getting into hot water!”

What improvement of comfort or of time is gained, by punctuality at meetings or at meals, if the humour of your host and hostess is less certain than the most unpunctual dinner-hour, and the unavoidable delay of half a minute may be cause of dark displeasure, for more than half a day! What profit from the best-assorted library, if you never can feel sure what book you dare take up, and must entertain most dismal doubts as to the exact spot on which you should lay it down! What reward for your conscientious scraping and rubbing of your *shoes*, before you entered, if your *feet* themselves are, evidently, glanced at, as if they should, altogether, have been left at the hall door!

“Not there, not there!” has been shrieked out, at your endeavours to throw aside your cloak: whatever are you to do with a dripping umbrella? A bright kid glove, forgotten on the table, has been restored to you, as if it were a dirty duster—what is to become of you, should you forget your pocket handkerchief?

But, oh! the care and caution demanded, should you stay! The only easy-looking chair is introduced to you, as “one that nobody should sit upon;” another is recommended to your attention, as “one you are on no account to lean against.” You are civilly requested “not to draw certain curtains,” and rather uncivilly reminded, “you should have let down certain blinds.”

A case is made for the cover of the embroidered ottoman, lest the dye of your garments should come off upon it; and, whilst the marks of *other* people's carelessness are exhibited for your instruction and construction, you contemplate the face of the polished mahogany of your appointed washstand, in helpless embarrassment, how *ever* you shall wash your own.

In a word, you are expected, like every other inmate of the dwelling, to exist *solely*, in reference to the excessive order and cleanliness around you; and every energy of your mind, at every moment of the day, must be exerted over every energy and movement of your body, to avoid your doing mischief, or giving offence continually.

I appeal to all who have experience in the state of things alluded to, whether the *feeling* of disorder and confusion was not produced in them by the very precautions used for their perpetual banishment! A confusion worse than any mere material confusion *can* be—a confusion of ideas and principles, of fears and fidgets, of pleasures and of pains, of luxuries and lumber; an undistinguishable mixture of venial oversights and unpardonable transgressions, low seats and high treason, large rooms and little minds, sweet portraits and sour faces, whole china and cracked tempers; besides the ever-recurring puzzle, as to whether people were living *in* a house or *for* a house; or whether the things, about which such a coil is made, do really belong to their “*soi-disant*” possessors, or the individuals, who claim for them such attention and respect, are, merely, *belongings of their things*. I ask the initiated in these extraordinarily establishments, did they ever clearly ascertain what they should do, or should not do, where they

might go, or might not go, could stay, or could not stay; and was not the only distinct thought remaining in their worn and bewildered minds—a conviction that, however enviable the position of a piece of lifeless furniture in such a family, the situation of a living, locomotive inmate, either as friend, visitor, or relative, was utterly unbearable?

And, after all, what *is* the end obtained by this perpetual care and sorrow? The depriving everything about us of its lawful use, and, consequently, of its real value; the establishment and practice of an IDOLATRY, that the veriest heathen might be ashamed of; and, worse than all, the leaving the priceless soul, which may be suddenly required at any moment, world-stained and perverted, to appear in the presence of its Maker, still absorbed in the fate and distribution of the worthless trifles it *must* leave behind on earth, and unfit for the enjoyments and companionships of heaven.

Of all the Muddles that bring misery and ruin in their train, defend me from the love-destroying and comfort-killing Muddle of *inexorable* cleanliness and order!

The above declaration of the author's sentiments will, it is to be hoped, tranquillise the fears of such of her youthful readers as had fancied she would certainly be too particular, and induce them to follow her to the *second part* of her subject, in which she endeavours to furnish ~~some~~ directions for the establishment of that rational and charitable household discipline, beneath which every comfort is increased; and the oldest friend, or latest acquaintance, feels happy and at home.

END OF THE INTERLUDE.

## PART II.

## MUDDLE DEFEATED.



## CHAPTER I.

“PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE,” more especially in regard to an evil for which, if allowed to gain ground, there is no probable remedy.—General rules for the prevention of “Muddle.”—Particular occasions in which Order and Disorder are likely to dispute the mastery.—Choice of a house.—Spring the usual season for house-hunting.—A young couple going on such an expedition.—Tempting appearance of suburban villas in fine weather.—Material disadvantages belonging to some of these pretty residences.—The advisability of examining what is to be a Winter as well as Summer residence in, or immediately after, *bad weather*.—Essentials in a suitable house.—A reasonable attention to the prosaic details of life, conducive to the enjoyment of its poetry.—The dwelling most comfortable for *living* in will always be most favourable for *loving* in.

IF “prevention is preferable to cure,” even *when* cure is practicable and easy, of what increased value must it be as a means of defeating those inveterate evils, which, if not prevented, or, at least, subdued, on their very first appearance, are scarcely capable of remedy. “Muddle,” in its latter stages, is unquestionably amongst the incurable disorders of humanity: an exception to this general rule being as much out of the ordinary course of things as any miracle recorded. There being, happily, no limit to the exercise of heavenly influence

upon human infirmity, we cannot assert that the reform of the most negligent or unthrifty housewife is *impossible*; but, inasmuch as no one can be what, in popular language, is styled "*a confirmed muddler*," without the deadening or extinction of every faculty or feeling upon which mortal agency can hope to make impression, such reformation is to be expected only from Him, who can bring forth water from the stony rock, and rain down bread from heaven. Very unwilling am I to believe concerning *any* poor fellow-sinners, that they are "quite past praying for;" but there are numbers who are long and very much past *preaching* to; and, "confirmed muddlers" being of this class, I turn from them to more hopeful subjects, even to such as have habits of order to *strengthen* or to *acquire*, and who have good sense enough to wish to *prevent* an evil, so generally incapable of *cure*.

*Estimating everything at its real value,*

*Keeping everything to its proper use,*

• *Putting everything into its proper place,*

*Doing everything at its proper time,—and*

*Keeping everybody to his proper business,—*

would, perhaps, comprehend all, or nearly all, that can promote comfort, order, and contentment, in our hearts and homes; but, as our duties rarely present themselves to our understandings and performance, in general forms and classifications, but rather, in daily and particular details, I will endeavour to furnish some directions applicable to those particular occasions, in which order and disorder are most likely to dispute the mastery: and, first,

## THE CHOICE OF A HOUSE.

Since the days of good St. Valentine, and probably, long before his time, spring appears to have been acknowledged as the fittest season for building nests and choosing houses ; and, as our dear little fellow, but feathered, bipeds, the birds, have the advantage of the *best* instructions, there can be no question as to *their* knowing what they are about ; and to a certain extent, it is very likely that we, their unfeathered fellow-creatures, cannot do better than follow their example. Accordingly, it is with a smile of the kindest affection and heartiest approbation, that, after a winter's courting by the paternal fireside, we behold a young couple sally forth upon a fine and cloudless morning, and learn that they are "going house-hunting !" We wish them good luck on their departure, sympathise with the bright, fresh thoughts in their hearts and countenances, as the bright, fresh costume of their age and circumstances passes beneath our gaze, and speculate upon *which* of the various tenements they intended to survey, will be finally honoured by their selection.

They pursue their path in youthful hope and happiness, with a joy in which no stranger can intermeddle, but which it does the very heart and soul of any kindly observer good to witness ; whilst every vacant dwelling on their road, beams on them a sun-illuminated invitation— "*Come and be happy here !*" Surely, if there is a pretty sight in the world,—one calculated to make you forget all the suffering and misery it contains—it is that of two young persons, heartily satisfied with themselves and with each other, engaged as above described. I remember being accused, at ten o'clock at night, of

looking especially delighted, and having no more satisfactory reason to offer than my having, at ten o'clock in the morning, observed and partly followed, a young couple who were evidently "going house-hunting."

And how pretty and inviting they *do* look—those newly-finished suburban villas—with their light, elegant verandahs, flower-filled balconies, ornamented stuccoed fronts, and stained-glass windows! What tasteful entrances, what fairy lawns! How pleasant to step out into the garden from the low window of the cheerful sitting-room, and to have tea beneath the shade of the lilacs and laburnums! "Can you imagine anything more charming *in summer or in summer weather*, than such a residence?" No, certainly; and we look in the summer faces of the intended housekeepers, and we feel with their summer feelings, and are so dazzled by the pervading "couleur de rose" in us and around us, that we nearly forget to ask them what it is only too natural they should never ask themselves—"If you take a house, so *peculiarly* adapted to *summer*, where do you intend to live *in winter*, that is to say, eight or nine months of every year in England!"

My dear young friends, believe me, I should be the last person in the world to wish to damp your pleasure; but, for this very reason, I would fain warn you from a situation, in which it would not have a dry thread left. If permitted to look in upon you after you are settled, I hope to talk with you over old times, *not* cough with you under new colds; I desire to witness the heart-healing interchange of "smile for smile" between husband and wife, not the chest-rending reciprocation of sneeze for sneeze. I long to see you expanding, and not shivering beneath the influence of your first matri-

monial home, and, *therefore*, it is that I counsel you, in your choice of a material, as well as of a spiritual tabernacle, to remember that it is for a climate, in which the rains are accustomed to descend and the winds to blow; and that its capability of affording you a comfortable and efficient shelter, can *only* be satisfactorily judged of in *bad weather*.

Do not then defer your *visit* to your intended dwelling until *the fine season*, beneath the beautifying sunbeams, of which, all shines with borrowed lustre; but, choosing a dark and dreary day, after a heavy storm, or a period of continued wet, order a well-aired carriage, and let it convey you to the examination of the abodes that had looked so tempting in your fair-day peregrinations. If they are *tolerable* in bad weather, you may confidently expect them to be *charming* when it is fine; whilst any deficiency that rain and wind may bring to light, can be pointed out to their landlords, with a much better prospect of being remedied *before* you have taken possession, than if only discovered and complained of *afterwards*. Go house-hunting, therefore, in fine weather, and walk my way, if possible; but go house-examining in bad weather, and I will answer for the coach-hire "paying itself."

And do not suppose, from such *prosaic* considerations, that I begrudge you the *poetry* of your young existence; far from it, it is my joy and rejoicing; but you know not as well as I do, *how much the poetry of life depends on common-place matters of fact*, the neglect of which must leave you in constant warfare with petty household miseries, and render anything approaching to elegance and refinement impossible. In your choice of a house then, let it be pretty, if *in other respects* advantageous;



but let no degree of beauty induce you to overlook the following requirements:—

*That its rent and taxes be such as you can pay without inconvenience, and its size proportioned to your means of furnishing, etc. ;*

*That its situation be healthy, respectable, and convenient ;*

*That it have good water and good drainage ;*

*That the chimneys do not smoke, and that doors and windows shut as well as open ;*

*That it be not infested with mice or noxious insects ;*

*That it be light and airy, but weather-tight, and fit for winter habitation.*

*Furthermore, that it have a pantry, cupboards, bells, wash-house, sink, cellar, etc., and not like too many modern cottages, little besides pretty papers, windows down to the ground, and plenty of “obligato” thorough draughts.*

I am quite aware that you will not meet with anything combining *all* that you could wish ; but, on that very account, you should abide by what is most essential, and *not* sacrifice real, solid comfort to showy and unsatisfactory appearance.

Whatever else you may have in common with the birds, remember that, their oily feathers being denied you, you cannot altogether live upon grass-plots or in shrubberies ; and you may believe the assurances of more experienced housekeepers than yourselves, that the dwelling the most comfortable to *live* in, will ever be the best to *love* in.



## CHAPTER II.

Primary considerations in appropriating and furnishing your rooms.—General rules.—The genteel class, and what it aspires to.—Wedding visit to the bride of a banker's clerk.—Uselessness and extravagance of a state drawing-room.—Utility and comfort of a second sitting or living room.

THE next thing, after taking a house, is to appropriate and furnish its apartments; and here it will be chiefly necessary to consider—

*The contents of your purse,  
The probability of your remaining,  
The size of your apartments,  
The service you will be able to command,*

*The wear and tear to which your furniture may be exposed, and your own happiness and comfort, rather than any fancied obligation of copying the fashion of other persons, whose constitutions, views, and circumstances may be different from yours.*

As the particular application of these general considerations to the numerous classes and conditions to which young housekeepers respectively belong, would exceed the limits of a much larger volume, my remarks will chiefly be directed to the large proportion, who begin housekeeping with small incomes, and must consequently be contented with a small house, in which they hope to remain till they are rich enough to remove to something better, have one or two female servants, and a reasonable prospect of a young and increasing family.

These persons, many of whom are respectably connected, and often *expensively educated*, consider themselves, and are very anxious that others also should consider them, "especially *genteel*;" and they do so with some reason, for gentility has no more devoted worshippers than they are.

In no class, perhaps, has luxury made greater innovations than in this; in no class is the commencement of matrimonial life more showy and extravagant, or its end more miserable and dreary!

When, in acknowledgment of the ornamented cards and orange-flower favours with which you have been distinguished, you pay your wedding visit, and await the entrance of the bride in her tiny, crowded drawing-room, you can hardly recognize the locality of the friends you came to see, so completely is all around you a miniature imitation of a saloon in St. James's-square. The damask curtains are as rich, the carpet even yet more delicate, the grate and fire-irons will require as much work to keep them tolerably bright, as any you would meet with in a mansion at the west end; chairs and sofa are such as nothing but holiday apparel should approach, whilst anything like the touch of "little fingers" upon the gauds and knickknacks about, would be swift and sure destruction. Well, perhaps your friends will *not* have any children; this room at least, is not calculated for them; but the master of the house, who has to work so hard for his 300*l.* or something less a year, when *he* comes in tired from business, he will certainly expect to sit down *somewhere*, and here, you would as soon think of introducing a bull into a china-shop, as of beholding a man, after a day in the city and a dusty walk home, stretching himself at ease

in such a boudoir as this, or bringing in a friend to tea, in dirty or rainy weather! Your visit was intended to the lady of a banker's clerk, and all that meets your eye would be handsome enough for the richest banker's lady. This boudoir and its appointments belong to an income twenty times as large as any which their possessors ever dream of, and to a style of living with which their *every-day* existence forms a most striking contrast.

Accordingly, as soon as the wedding visits have been received in it, and its various treasures have been sufficiently displayed, admired, and envied, it will be closely bagged and druggeted, or, perhaps, shut up altogether, excepting on those particular occasions, when the temptation of incurring extra trouble and expense, in order to entertain other genteel people in the neighbourhood, may become too powerful to be resisted. Then, covers are once more taken off, and albums and elegancies taken out, the gilding shines beneath unusual light, the carpet glows unconscious of a drugget, embroidered cats are let out of their bags, and India chessmen stand forth from their boxes; the costly china joins company with the well-whitened silver; and full of admiration at her various possessions, and agitation as to what may happen to them, the hostess expects and welcomes her invited guests. These take *their seats and colds* in the seldom-inhabited boudoir, the ladies talk of crochet, the gentlemen of stocks; all pretty things are at a premium, all pretty faces at a discount; a flushed maid-servant hands coffee to the gentlemen and spills tea upon the ladies; the guests who would make room for her *before* them, do terrible mischief to what stands *behind*; every body's chair is on every body's dress, every body sits in every body's pocket; and, whatever

liberty of speech and thought may exist in this select circle of free-born Britons, no one is *corporeally* free to move. The inviters and invited naturally become fidgety in proportion, and the hour of separation is hailed as a deliverance from heat, bondage, and inexpressible discomfort, not lightly to be incurred again; and, on the morrow, the miniature state drawing-room is covered up once more, as useless and as close as ever.

Such is its destiny, in the house of the careful and the childless; but not in every instance is the original sanctuary of gentility allowed to preserve its beauty and seclusion. The children who, at the period of its appropriation, were "neither born nor thought of," may come in spite of every non-preparation for their appearance; and then the idolized boudoir must either become a source of continual scolding or contention, or, if abandoned to the levelling practices of the young republicans, it will remain in faded dilapidation, a monument of parental childishness and childish retribution. And surely, if ever retaliation can be justified, the torn paper, broken ornaments, and soiled furniture of the state drawing-room by infant energies, may be excused. Not only has it deprived them, from their birth, of the comfort of a nursery; but before their persevering encroachments and depredations had produced the tranquillizing verdict that "there was nothing left to spoil," it was connected with the greater part of the privations or punishments they can remember. It was to prevent their being troublesome in the drawing-room, when used for company, that they were consigned to a hot kitchen and a cross maid; it was to gain time for cleaning its bright grate, that they were left dirty and

unwashed ; the touching of its many pretty things has brought down upon them their hardest slaps ; the tripping over its half-fastened druggot has caused their severest falls, whilst the money wasted on its useless grandeur, and which might have been accumulating for their benefit, will be demanded in vain for the education which would be useful to them through life.

O ye dear young housekeepers, whatever you may contemplate in the way of magnificent gentility for the anniversary of your five-and-twentieth wedding-day, do not *begin* your career with those mere luxuries and ornaments, which are less likely to be used than abused in your establishment ; above all, spare yourselves and those around you the unnecessary expense and trouble of a room *chiefly* to be shut up and cared for.

But whilst it is highly *dis*-advantageous to have a sealed or state apartment in a small but increasing family, nothing is more conducive to health, order, and convenience, than the regular occupation of *two living-rooms*—one for meals and the more laborious employments of the day, the other for lighter duties, rest, and social intercourse, and especially for the amusements and enjoyments of the evening. Here, though no unsuitable extravagance puts every-day dress to shame,—though chairs and sofa are evidently meant to sit upon, and tables, strong enough to lean against, are free for common purposes and common inmates ; some of the luxuries or elegances of life, keepsakes or curiosities, pleasant to heart or sight, may find a fitting corner, or give a beauty and a language to the neatly-papered walls. Here, though children may walk about in peace, or drop a bit of cake without ruining the carpet, they may receive their first lessons in the salutary restraints

imposed by civilised society, whilst *certain* pretty things are shown to their delighted *gaze*, on condition that they do not *touch*. Here, their own more costly toys may be trusted to their own more tender handling, and here they will regularly expect to receive some extra pleasure connected with their best behaviour, and their *cleanest*, if not always their best dresses. Here, also, the piano, which, never being exposed to the damp of an *unaired* atmosphere, stands *wonderfully* in tune, will invite Mamma to exercise her fingers that her darlings may dance around her; and when, after their happiest hour, the little ones are safe and still in bed, and husband and wife are left together,—when the modest but ample curtains are snugly drawn, and the fire burns cheerily and bright, and present certain love and happiness contrast with former doubts and fears,—here, whilst *habitual* order and refinement restore the exhausted spirits after daily toil and care, old tales will be related, old songs will be sung; and, should any friend drop in to pass away an hour, or valued acquaintances accept a cordial invitation to form a larger party, the room, if rather crowded, will be full of happy people, fearless of injuring anything or anybody, and, when they *must* go home, it will be to add to their pleasantest remembrances “a most delightful evening.”

Many other considerations combine to render such an arrangement “a great comfort,” even to the servants, who often form the excuse for *not* adopting it. Opportunity for thorough ventilation and thorough cleaning, the laying of the morning fire overnight, which is so advisable in the short days of winter; all this is rendered easy by the occupation of a second sitting-room; whilst, in the families in which economy of service and of firing

are most felt to be "a great object," very little is really gained by confinement to *one* room, and shutting up the other. Unless the moth and rust, which claim the *reversion* of all earthly hoards, are to be put into *immediate* possession, rooms that are not used must be aired and cleaned, not only occasionally, but frequently; why then should not the trouble and firing spent on them be made advantageous to *the owners*?

If you *cannot* conscientiously afford yourselves a second sitting-room, well and good; you may contrive to be happy without it; but, if you *can*, I fancy you will be healthier and happier with it. For my own part, I would always rather dine in a clean, tidy kitchen, and have a fresh airy sitting-room to retire to afterwards, than remain all day in the cabbage or stuffing-scented apartment, to which so many *genteel* persons condemn themselves and families, for the sake of their acquaintances and drawing-room.





## CHAPTER III.

Spare Bed-room, unless for a constant visitor of importance, needs not be the largest in the house.—Valuable privilege of having those we love in our home circle.—The drawers and closets of the spare room should also be spared for the accommodation of its occupants.—The selfishness of allowing acknowledged and avoidable inconveniences in a room destined for friends that you could not put up with in your own. Scriptural hospitality and its reward. Nursery arrangements.

THE principal objection to a “state drawing-room,” namely, its general uselessness, will equally apply to the costly furnishing of the largest and best bed-room in the house, for the accommodation of occasional visitors. If, indeed, your hospitality is intended to be constant, and the friends you are likely to receive will require as much space as yourselves, the generosity of such an arrangement may be highly commendable; but if, as it more generally happens, your temporary guests are young or single persons, or such as are “here to-day and away to-morrow,” a smaller apartment may suffice for your visitors, and your own health and comfort be promoted by your keeping the larger for your own use.

Remember, however, if you *can* afford a spare-room and the exercise of the hospitality for which it is intended, that a reasonable portion of its drawers and closets should likewise be *spared* for the accommodation of your friends; and do not, as is too frequently the case, allow them to find every place so full of your own goods and chattels, that the tidiest and most orderly

must either remain in a continual litter, or keep their things packed up, as if for immediate departure.

In connection with this subject, let me caution you against that selfish thoughtlessness which suffers the existence of other annoyances and privations in the apartment destined for your guests, which you could not put up with in your own. Where the relative proportions of the dwelling and its inmates render the appropriation of a regular spare-room impossible, and the large heart will, notwithstanding, extend its limited resources to give shelter to the unexpected guest, or an asylum to the orphan or the widow; *then*, indeed, inconveniences may not only be naturally expected, but should be *gratefully* submitted to; the companionship of persons, generous enough to take their full share of discomfort for the sake of the recipients of their hospitality, being more than an equivalent for greater space and luxury with others less liberally disposed; but, where a spare-room is part of the establishment, and its furniture and appointments form part of the pride and glory of its possessors, they are bound to ascertain that it can offer every substantial comfort to its intended occupants, and not be a mere show-room, in which, owing to some essential deficiency, the host and hostess, by their own confession, could never sleep a wink themselves.

And, surely, of all the privileges that competence enjoys, and poverty might sigh for, none is more highly to be valued than "the spare-room," which enables us to cherish in our homes and families some who have the chief places in our affection and esteem; so that the "long journey," which separates us *generally*, shall, *occasionally*, bring our dearest also nearest to us, to be

under the same roof with ourselves, the witnesses and sharers of our daily life. There is no social intercourse like this ; nor will friends, who really love each other, ever be satisfied with less. The visitor of the hour or of the day, can neither give nor receive the enjoyment caused and felt by those who bring "their things," and stay. Besides, we are most of us more dependent on "our things," than we are willing to allow ; and, only when we have them comfortably around us, do we feel perfectly at home.

In early youth, indeed, and in full health and spirits, when every variety is charming, and habits of order and convenience are not yet established, a separation from our belongings is either not felt at all, or considered rather as an amusement than a privation, Dirty or dusty shoes, tangled ringlets, blacks on cheeks and noses, are things unheeded ; or, if admonished of their existence, the being "on the parish" for towel, brush, or comb, is quite a matter of indifference ; whilst shuffling about in shoes that were half a foot too large, and wearing sundry garments that fitted anybody better than ourselves, rendered the wet evening which had soaked our own habiliments, and prevented our return home that night, about the merriest in our recollection.

But, as years advance, and the habits we have acquired become more fixed, and infirmities, as well as years, increase upon us, the absence of "our things" is very differently felt. Only our *own* slippers ease our feet, we would rather *not* use anybody's brush, we miss our accustomed dressing-gown, and we find that occasional retirement and repose are absolutely necessary to enable us to enjoy the society of the dearest friends we have. Poor dependent creatures that we are ! only

when the lower corporeal nature is satisfied, can our spiritual nature be at liberty; and thus, our most delightful intercourse must naturally be expected from the inmates of the comfortable spare-room; those, who, for the time, are as much at home as we are.

With such only can we share the genial and inspiring eventide, with all its holy, heart-fed light, increasing in us and around us, amidst the deepening shadows of material darkness. To the "friends staying with us" it is, that we communicate the home thoughts and sympathies that arise from daily occurrences and near connections; *theirs* is the quick understanding and return of bright and harmless household jests, transforming annoyances themselves into sources of amusement.

From such only can we expect the deep interest in our welfare that will render everything concerning us important in their estimation; to such may children's children turn, and meet with the warm embrace and hospitable welcome, long ago received, and still remembered, by those whom parents or grand parents once sheltered and were kind to.

If then, you *have* any room to spare, let it be a SPARE room; and let it be furnished and consecrated in the beautiful spirit of hospitality which, in the old time, raised the small "chamber on the wall," and placed therein "the bed, the table, and the stool, and the candlestick, that the man of God might turn in there and take his rest." "The bed, and the table, and the stool, and the candlestick," doubtless implied *all* that the simple habits of the day required for the comfort of the expected guest. Increasing wants and refinement in our own times, will suggest other furniture and conveniences; but the spirit of kindly and considerate enter-

tainment is the same ; and, when employed in preparing a comfortable sojourn for those who appear to us the children of God, will never fail to bring enduring blessings upon ourselves and families.

Where there is not a *regular* nursery establishment, and the mother is a *real* mother, her children will be chiefly with her in the usual sitting-room, or she must be with them in what she makes a nursery. With the resource of a bed-room *near*, in which children may be washed and dressed, their presence *need* not be the cause of that which is unsightly or indecorous ; neither are they any happier or healthier for being allowed to eat bread and butter *all day all over the house*. If a room can be appropriated to children, it is certainly of more consequence than securing a spare room.



## CHAPTER IV.

GENTLEMAN'S ROOM.—Paramount importance of securing to any husband, whose pursuits require it, a quiet corner for his own devices.—Attractive influence of such a *home within his home*.—Most men who are not Mollies have less aversion to dust than dusters.—The little foibles of the Lords of the Creation must (to a certain extent) be respected.—Precautions to be used when Woman's Meddle must be brought against Man's "Muddle."—Way to reconcile the most particular to the occasional purification of their apartments.—The greatest discretion recommended; as, if anything can justify a man for *sometimes* perversely thinking of putting away his wife, it is her *always* perversely persisting in putting away his things.

BUT, far beyond drawing-room or spare-room, and important above almost every other arrangement in your establishment, is the consecration of one room to the especial use of the master of the house, *should his pursuits be such as to render occasional solitude and quiet needful, or merely pleasurable to him*. A sound and a lovely policy is that which secures to a husband, in his own family, certain privileges and comforts that he can never find elsewhere, and that are calculated to counterbalance the weight of the many other attractions which his immediate circle cannot offer. A room to himself—a home within his home—is such a privilege, and few sacrifices are too great, if they may procure it for him; few advantages are great enough, if they must take it from him; it will keep him from clubs and card parties abroad, or from being "always about" at home; it will prove a sanctuary from the numerous petty domestic

troubles and annoyances that, as few men can comprehend or tolerate, it is much better they should not see ; or, should business or amusement induce a temporary absence, the image of his *own* room, and the gentle, loving being presiding over its many indulgences and comforts, will follow him into "hall and bower," and creating a salutary yearning in the midst of greater luxury and wealth, will guide him safely back again, where only he can rest in perfect happiness and safety.

Yes, my dear young friends, even if you must do without a drawing-room, or send your visitors to lodgings, or be, in many other ways, cramped and inconvenienced, make no difficulties in granting a study, or a dressing-room, or *some* place for their own devices, to your "gude men ;" nor deny them anything (in reason) calculated to make them comfortable *in their own peculiar fashion*. And, that they may be so, let no mistaken ideas of duty or indispensable household arrangements, induce you to mar the concession you have made. If the gentleman of the house is to have a room to himself, do not intrude upon him there uncalled for ; above all, do not insist upon its being either cleaner, or tidier, or more comfortable than is agreeable *to him*. "Everybody has his little foibles," and, without wishing to say anything in disparagement of the "lords of the creation," and without forgetting to render justice to their *general* scrupulous *personal* nicety, it is neither their practice nor their province to be as *domestically* clean and orderly as their ladies ; they have, therefore, different views in regard to what is necessary for cleanliness and order, and these views must be considered and charitably allowed for, although it may not always be possible fully to enter into them. Even those men,

who have some degree of satisfaction in seeing that things *are* clean, are apt to be unreasonable and impatient, if obliged to witness the operations that must make them so; whilst the implements of domestic purification are their confessed abhorrence.

There is no help for this peculiarity of theirs, and the women must just put up with it; for it is inherent in their very nature. Who shall say, indeed, whether some latent but powerful instinct—kneaded into the composition of *the first man*—may not cause *every man* to entertain a kind of filial regard and veneration for the maternal *Dust* from which he was primitively taken; so that, at certain moments, and during uncertain tempers, his natural affection for his mother may lead him to defend her from the aggressions of his wife. But, however this may be, the fact is beyond dispute, that almost all men, who are *not* “Mollies,” exhibit a much greater preference for dust than dusters; and, consequently, every woman who wishes (and most women do wish it) that her mother-in-law and herself should have separate establishments—must go warily to work to dispossess her. Still, “as too bad is too bad,” and “there is a moderation in all things;” for which, by the way, neither Dust nor her mortal descendants are particularly famous, “things may get to such a height,” and dirt may get to such a depth in the gentleman’s own room, that the most discreet and indulgent housewife may find it imperative to interfere. Let her do so then; and, when her husband is in the best of humours, and the remainder of the house is in the most perfect order, and the day is particularly fine, and the moment especially propitious, and the wife is conscious of those talismanic female charms which will “bring a man to



*anything*," let her eloquently state the exigences of the case, then humbly entreat, coax, flatter, or *command* him to care for his own most precious "rattletraps"—subsequently entice, decoy, lead, guide, draw, carry (anything but drive), him from the stronghold of dust and cobwebs; and, immediately making all the concentrated energies of all the household to bear upon the conquered territory, let her give her husband's room a quick but thorough cleansing.

The business managed in this way, and every article of fancy and of furniture conscientiously restored to what, in every woman's estimation, would appear the most unsuitable of places, there is some hope that the healthful, renovated atmosphere, that will greet the owner on his return—the bright and cheerful freshness of ceiling, floor, and paper, smiling at being clean again; and especially, the recognition of his dear belongings, and the dearer, loving skill, which has, apparently, cleansed everything and disturbed nothing, will go far, not merely to reconcile "the gude man" to occasional purifications, but even to make him grateful for them.

*Without* such precautionary measures, and, unauthorized by such express permission from her "lord and master," let no woman venture to bring cleanliness and order into the "royal peculiar" she has founded. Above all, let her refrain from laying so much as a smoothing finger upon any of the legal or literary looking litters about, and that might seem in especial need of her arrangement. However strong the temptation to bring *Meddle* versus *Muddle*, on behalf of what *she* thinks *should* constitute her husband's comfort, let her not give way to it; it may be more than her head is worth to displace a single item; nor if her head is

worth a price at all, will she venture to attempt it; for, truly, *if* anything *can* justify a man for *sometimes* thinking of putting away his wife, it is, when, despite of continual entreaty and admonition, "she is *always* putting away his things."

NOTE.—It would be doing injustice to my earliest recollections, as well as to the experience of later years, not to make signal mention of the great love of order to be observed in *many* of the "Lords of the Creation," especially soldiers and sailors. I have known "*very* particular old maids" and *very* fidgetty matrons; but I have never seen any feminine arrangement to equal what, as a baby-attendant in my father's dressing-room, first gave me the idea of the beauty and convenience of "a place for everything, and everything in its place." To get this beautifully-arranged room *dusted*, however, was no trifling matter; whilst nothing but the tact and loving zeal I have recommended could ever have procured for it "the sweeps and a thorough cleaning." Many women would do well not to trust the most trustworthy servants in other respects, with any dusting or arrangement of books, pictures, etc., in their husband's room.



## CHAPTER V.

FURNITURE.—Particular and comprehensive directions impossible.—General recommendations, founded on experience of what lasts longest, and looks best.—Opposite excuses brought forward to justify the purchase of unsuitable furniture.—Tables.—Chiffoniers.—Bed-room Couch.—Eider-down Quilt. Old-fashioned Bureau.—*One* set of China.—Small articles in frequent requisition.

So many various circumstances must regulate the furnishing of the residence of each young housekeeper, that any attempt at *particular* directions would be useless. But the following comprehensive observations, made in different families of the class for which I am writing, and approved by their practice and experience, will, I trust, be found acceptable.

*Let all the articles of furniture with which you begin housekeeping be strong,—well-seasoned,—as elegant as is compatible with strength,—not too large; such as are easily moved, easily cleaned and dusted, and suitable to the places and purposes for which they are intended. Prefer having enough plain things, to being scantily supplied with fine things; and, as a rule, choose such articles as will not only be of the most use, but will require the least care, and, consequently, give the least work.*

These suggestions of common sense are but too frequently disregarded, and that, under manifold pretences. Some account for the unsuitable size and costliness of the furniture in their miniature abode, by the hope and

expectation of "not *always* living in such a band-box ;" others excuse the obvious extravagance they have committed, by the consideration that, *if* they did not get such things *at first*, they should certainly have no money for them afterwards ;—and thus, many remain encumbered and out of pocket, the whole of their married career, by purchases which need an apology to themselves and others, as often as they are felt to be in the way and out of place, that is to say, *continually*.

To the *uncertain* expectants of a more considerable establishment, I would suggest, that, as the largest furniture with which it is practicable to cram a "band-box," will be insufficient to fill or to adorn a mansion,—and taking a *larger house* can only be a salutary measure, with the larger income that would allow of fresh purchases suited to its dimensions,—it is much wiser, in the mean time, to be contented with such things as, whilst they would not look amiss in the smaller rooms of a more spacious dwelling, will leave their possessors space to move in, and air to breathe, in the "band-box" to which they are at first confined. For those who, acknowledging the unsuitableness of their furniture to their *present* condition, as well as to their *future* prospects, were anxious to *make sure* of this disadvantage whilst they could,—there is nothing but the trite observation that "there is no accounting for taste." I would, however, recommend all who prefer room in their houses, money in their purses, and good sense in their understandings,—*not* to follow their example.

An opposite, but equally unfortunate, mistake is theirs, who, with the intention of "getting better *some day*," and, under the impression that anything is good enough for "a first turn in,"—throw away the money that

would have procured them lasting comforts, on ill-made or veneered furniture, and transparent druggets, the freshness and availability of which scarcely survive the honey-moon,—whilst the day of procuring “something better,” suffers an indefinite prorogation.

Housekeepers who furnish in the spirit of the observations at the beginning of this chapter, will avoid both extremes. Should increasing means allow them to occupy a larger house, the chaste and solid furniture with which they began housekeeping, will be no discredit to the new establishment; or, if sold, will fetch a reasonable price in most markets; should they, on the other hand, remain in their first abode, that which was useful and suitable originally, will continue to be so still; each year that takes something from its fashion, will add to its value and associations; and if a well-deserved compliment is bestowed on its freshness or durability, the owners may reply with innocent exultation, “We have had it ever since our marriage, and have never regretted the money that it cost us.” The fact is, that *good things* cannot be made for nothing, even in these days of miraculous cheapness, and that, especially in the article of furniture, “the dearest is often the cheapest in the end,” and “*vice versâ*.”

The following remarks, in regard to some of the most essential articles in daily use, may be found useful to the inexperienced.

**TABLES.**—Tables with drawers take no more room than tables without drawers, and drawers, in these closetless times, are more than ever needed and acceptable; it is well, therefore, to have drawers in the greater number, if not of all your tables. Even where they are shallow they will be useful for papers, a table-

cloth, etc.; and for *some* purpose or other, they will be constantly voted *comforts* by most persons. The want of drawers in toilet-tables or in wash-stands, is a great impediment to tidiness in a bed-room, or comfort in dressing; as any one who has encountered the pink petticoated dressing-tables in sea-side lodgings, will easily comprehend. Where there is a lady's-maid to set out a toilet, or to pack and unpack a dressing-case, the inconvenience of the petticoated table may not be felt; but for the numbers who must wait upon themselves, the having comb and brush at hand, and being able to screen them from dust and observation, as soon as they are done with, will be found highly desirable.

For the many housekeepers whose small sitting-rooms open one into the other, and who seldom or ever give dinner parties, two oblong tables of similar and moderate dimensions, that might be used *together*, if requisite, and will look well *apart*, generally answer better than the expensive *sets of dining-tables*, the rarely used parts of which have to be carried up and down, and which, if not in constant use, are often put together with considerable difficulty, and not more easily separated. A third smaller table of the same height and width, but half or one-third of the length of the larger, will be most available for an additional guest; and when not wanted to serve the purpose of an extra flap at dinner, may be useful for something else. Three such tables, that may be joined together in different ways, or employed separately, will likewise be more readily disposed of than others, should a change of circumstances demand a change of furniture; and this is also a consideration.

Although rather in anticipation of the requirements of future years, I cannot forbear mentioning what is so

valuable in a large family of little children, A LOW FIRM TABLE WITH FOUR DRAWERS, in which slates, pencils, and pictures may be kept by each young proprietor, and which may serve for their amusement and occupation on rainy days. Such an article, either in a regular or irregular nursery, will tend greatly to their happiness and comfort, and save them from their unsteady and uncomfortable position at the tables of the "children of a larger growth," where, with dangling legs and sprawling arms, the poor wee men and women, in their eager struggle for light and room enough, generally end by knocking themselves or their contemporaries over, and sometimes by being dismissed as nuisances by their unsympathising seniors, who, with feet floor-rested and their arms at liberty, have not "the most distant notion what upon earth *can* make these *little things* so troublesome." At a table suited to their dimensions, some of the hours during which the poor "*little things*" might be annoying or annoyed, will be the happiest of the twenty-four. A table for four will suffice in most families, as it is to be hoped that when that number is exceeded, number one may be already promoted to the bigger table, with a footstool, whilst numbers six, seven, or eight can hardly be candidates for any intellectual sedentary employment whatever. At a "little tea or dinner," such a table always *stretches, or else* the largest guests will shrink to its proportions.

The pretty compact CHIFFONIER of modern days, is a great improvement upon the heavy and expensive sideboard, which I can remember as taking up so considerable a portion of many a small dining-parlour, or, rather, living-room. In some of its numerous varieties, the chiffonier will be found amply sufficient for the daily

use of those for whom I am writing, and will ornament many a recess, in which no sideboard could be placed.

For those who employ their bed-room otherwise than for repose and dressing, and who are, consequently, in want of a table, etc., therein, there is no piece of furniture so available as the old-fashioned BUREAU, with its commodious drawers below, and its invaluable partitions and pigeon-holes above; its table-flap let down or put up at pleasure, and its chief treasures thus covered up and secured at the shortest possible notice, and with the least possible trouble. Especially in the apartment of single brothers or sisters, is something of this kind an inestimable comfort; and if any young lady, who cannot command a modern *secrétaire* on her marriage, is requested by her grandmother to accept of one of its respectable predecessors, I do not think she will ever regret giving house-room to what, in all the changes of taste, must certainly be *useful*, and, in *some* of them may, under the name of “rococo,” become *the very height of fashion*.

In these days of general luxury and convenience, a sitting-room without a sofa for the lady and an easy-chair for the gentleman, is so rare an exception, that it would be almost superfluous to recommend them where they can be procured.

But, supposing these articles are matters of course in the sitting-room, I would suggest to persons who have to purchase *everything* new, that whilst extra *chairs* in a *bed-room* are rather in the way than otherwise, A SIMPLE COMMODIOUS COUCH is, on many occasions, especially in illness, when a nurse must sleep in the room, of the greatest comfort and utility. A frame of cane, or even of wood, and a separate mattress and bolster,



are all that is requisite ; and, covered with chintz or dimity, such a couch will not only be a most convenient, but a pretty piece of furniture.

Any one acquainted with the superior warmth, lightness, and durability of the EIDER-DOWN COVERLET or "DUVET," will readily adopt it, in preference to additional blankets. Time was, perhaps, when English prejudices would have revolted from lying "*under a feather-bed*," as the untried *duvet* was designated ; but since John Bull has resided so much abroad, he is fain to confess, in his more candid moments, that in the items of bed and bedding, *some* of his continental neighbours have the advantage of him, and that, as regards both cleanliness and comfort, his children might, in some few particulars, take useful lessons from them. The eider-down coverlet, which is so portable, so easily purified by exposure to the air and sun in summer, and so efficient in winter, will not only give the warmth of *several* blankets, but, when contemporary blankets are worn and discoloured, will be as warm and as good as ever, and no despicable possession for posterity.

Housekeepers, who set little value upon occasional display, but have, on the contrary, a great regard for habitual convenience and equanimity, will never cumber their closets or their consciences with a second or *best* set of china or dinner-service. The china and earthenwares in common use are now so pure and even elegant, that the most fastidious guest could hardly demand anything better than what serves the family in general ; so that consideration for our company is needless. There being but *one* set, will insure its being treated with more respect by the servants ; and, as the chief fractures to which treasured cups and saucers are liable, occur in

getting them down and putting them up again—and the most valuable is ever the most unlucky—the services which are always “out,” and which may be easily replaced if broken, are, consequently, much less liable to accident than all which cost a “mint of money, and cannot possibly be matched in town or country.” Stronger ware, then, for the kitchen, if you please; but, unless you have a *careful housekeeper* instead of a *careless housemaid*, do not add useless and expensive breakables to your possessions.

Besides the larger and more obviously necessary articles of furniture, there are many small objects and implements wanted in a house and garden, such as hammer, sieve, garden tools, etc. etc., which young housekeepers would do well to procure at *first*, so as to avoid the singular and inconvenient borrowing-system not unfrequently maintained in regard to such trifles. Mutual and neighbourly assistance on rare and unexpected emergencies, is both allowable and pleasant; but to be always “on the parish” for corkscrews, spades, and hammers, is certainly unbecoming in persons who “have two gowns, and everything (apparently) handsome about them.”

In conclusion, I would recommend all about to furnish a *residence for themselves*, to profit by the experience of *others*, to procure what they know will be serviceable and comfortable, and to avoid whatever is likely to be felt a mere encumbrance.

NOTE.—*Petticoated tables* may be contrived so as to furnish a roomy bag, fixed in a sliding frame, and calculated to hold bonnets or light things; but they are not agreeable to sit against.

## CHAPTER VI.

**DIVISION OF DOMESTIC LABOUR.**—The fact of each person having but one pair of hands, a reason why each individual pair should be employed to the best advantage.—The duty of a housewife who has servants under her is, chiefly, to think, to look, to overlook, to order, to provide; she has *no right* to expect her servants to remember what she forgets.—*Putting away and arranging, getting out and giving out*, time-taking but comfort-producing occupations; and, as such, not to be considered needless interruptions to sedentary employment.—Children no excuse for the neglect of what mainly contributes to their health and comfort.—The stitch in time.—Right of old stockings to come to an end after a reasonable period of usefulness.—The procuring good and available smaller garments from partially worn and shabby larger ones, the most profitable object on which maternal industry can be exercised, and more economical than constantly mending things no longer worth the time and thread bestowed upon them.

THAT “everybody has but one pair of hands,” and that consequently, “nobody can do everything,” is the *excuse* generally brought forward to palliate the omission of duties, *especially* within the province of the individuals from whom they are demanded; and as the proposition is, *in itself*, so obviously true that no one could possibly dispute it, the falsity of its *application* to the matter in question is too often overlooked, and the *excuse* is accepted as valid and satisfactory. But it is not so; for, although no one, having but *one* pair of hands, nor any fabulous giant of old reported to have fifty, could be reasonably expected to do *everything*, the very limits of human capability make it the more urgent that each

person should do *something*, and that each should direct his energies to that which he can do *best*, or which is most essential to be done. It is therefore, *because* the *mistress* of a family *cannot* do *everything*, and *because* the *servants* in a family *cannot* do *everything*, that mistress and servants should clearly understand what are their respective duties, in order that each may labour in her vocation, and that all may contribute, not to the confusion, but the comfort of the establishment.

Now, the duty of a housewife who has servants under her, is not so much to be *always doing herself*, as it is to *appoint* the work of others ; to ascertain *what* is to be done, to order *when* and *by whom* it is to be done, to assure herself that it *is* done, and to examine *how* it has been done. The servants are *the hands*, the mistress, if deserving of the name, should be *the head* of the household ; it is hers to think, to order, to provide, to arrange, to look, to overlook, to remember, to remind,—and she has no more *right* to *expect* these things from her servants, than *they* have to demand from their mistress that she should get up *first*, to light the fires, or take their places in the kitchen. And yet, how often do we hear a poor hard-worked and hard-working-girl,—who only puts up with the drudgery of her place because she is *not* clever enough for anything superior,—how often do we *hear* her blamed, or *overhear* her rated, because she has not *thought* of this, that, or the other, or, because she has omitted to *remind* her *mistress* of certain things, which, if the mistress herself forgets, no one besides can be expected to remember.

“ That tiresome, stupid girl ! she never thinks of anything ! I declare she has no head in the world ! she must have known that the beer was out, and that,

yesterday, being Saturday, we should want an extra loaf! I'm sure one had better do without any one at all, than have to see to everything oneself!" Common complaints these, but not more common than unjust; for, if a servant may be reasonably blamed for not *doing* what she is told, a mistress is equally to blame for not *telling* her what she is to do, when out of the usual routine of her work; and, although a thoughtful servant is a blessing and a treasure that any mistress would be *glad* to have, no habitually careless mistress has a right to *expect* such a one; thinking and providing being her own especial office, which she cannot delegate to others. The whole economy and happiness of every family must depend upon its mistress discharging its higher duties *herself*; nor is this so difficult or so time-taking as many would lead us to suppose. Generally speaking, half an hour *daily* spent in ascertaining the provisions, the wants and work of her household, and an occasional visitation of every room, closet and corner, will be sufficient, and will do more to promote the order and comfort of every individual in her house, than if—as many a poor drudge complains—she was “slaving from morning till night, without a moment to make herself fit to be seen;” and was, in all probability, scolding or lamenting during the same period.

From this diurnal “looking well to the ways of her household,” no mistress can be lawfully exempted but by severe illness, or something equally incapacitating. Even where there are children, or, where that particular excuse for general neglect—a baby in arms—can be brought forward, there is no reason why the baby, which must be carried somewhere, should not, if in health, be carried into the kitchen whilst the mother orders

dinner, or looks into the pantry ; or taken up into the bed-rooms to see that their cleanliness and ventilation will secure her darling from a fever. If the baby be too delicate, or the weather too severe for an infant to leave a warm room, then let the mother who has but one maid, allow the maid to remain with the child for a few minutes whilst she visits the kitchen ; or let her make her observations when baby is asleep. Elder children may receive some of their most valuable lessons during these perambulations ; and, as going everywhere and seeing everything is exceedingly congenial to the habits and inclinations of little people, their silence and good behaviour, in return for what they generally consider as a "treat," may be reasonably and usefully insisted on. Servants, however, should *very seldom* be reprov'd when children are present ; so that in cases of admonition, and, probably, in some others, the company of young people might not be advisable ; but, as at the period when they are old enough to be a check upon conversation, they *should* also be old enough to be left by themselves for a few minutes ; children can *never* constitute an available excuse for neglecting what is so important to their comfort and well-being. One of the most imperative duties of the mistress of a family is, then, to ascertain what is the state of her house and household ; and if at the same time, she shows herself equally solicitous concerning the comforts of her servants, her visits will be more welcomed than disliked, or only objected to by those whom she should dismiss as soon as possible.

PUTTING AWAY AND SETTING IN ORDER, GETTING OUT AND GIVING OUT, will constitute another comfort-producing, but yet more time-taking part of the occu-

pations of the mistress of a family. Too many omit or lament over this portion of their daily task, on account of *the time* it takes, as if that time were lost, because, as they falsely imagine, *there is nothing to show for it*. But this is just as unreasonable as if a master artificer were to consider the taking measure and providing materials for his "orders" a *waste* of time and energy, and fancy he was never doing any good, excepting when tailoring or tinkering with his apprentices. Nor is it only the *regular* demands made upon the store and housekeeper, for which a mistress should be prepared; in a thousand unexpected forms, the *good* wife and mother is liable to be *interrupted*, and she will submit to these interruptions with the better grace when she considers them as *an important part of the business of the day*; of more consequence to the happiness of her household than any sedentary employment, she must lay aside for their sake. General order and forethought will, indeed, do much to *limit* these applications, but no housewife can expect to be exempted from them. And let her not overlook the *dignity* and *privilege* of being thus wanted and called upon continually. The Almighty, who condescendingly chooses the relations of human life as types of those which he desires should subsist between Himself and His creatures, has, in ordaining that "the eyes of a maiden should look unto the hand of her mistress," hallowed the duty He appoints, by making it illustrative of the bounteous Providence that upholds the universe. How should this consideration encourage the Christian matron to look, in her turn, unto the bounteous hand of her Heavenly Father, and to seek from Him the strength, wisdom and patience which will enable her to minister

cheerfully and discreetly to all and of all he has committed to her care !

"THE STITCH IN TIME which saveth nine,"—more often ninety-nine—is especially incumbent on a housewife. Her little namesake or some modern substitute, should never be far from its mistress, so that her hand may be as ready to repair, as her eye to detect such casualties to buttons, strings, or gloves, as make persons, the best appointed in other respects, appear shabby and deplorable, and bring certain, and, *mostly*, deserved blame on any female relative who suffers these distressed and distressing objects to "go about such figures." "The stitch in time" *neglected*, never fails to produce that unfortunate accumulation of things, which so many always *meant* and *are* always *meaning to do*, and which, joined to other supervening occupations which really *must be done*, bring about the common and bewildering consummation of, "not knowing which way to turn." Obedience to the scriptural injunction of immediate attention to what "the hand findeth to do," or "the stitch in time," is the secret by which large families are kept respectably on very slender means; everything looks as well and lasts as long again as could have been expected; and women who, to judge by their neighbours, should, like them, be overwhelmed with domestic drudgery, are so often happily at leisure.—N.B. A double set of working materials and implements, the one upstairs and the other down, greatly facilitates "the stitch in time," and saves many a run after *the* workbox.

The *classification* and examining of articles to be mended at home or abroad, is an excellent arrangement. The hand being *in* and the materials being *out* for certain occupations on certain days, is most favourable to



despatch. A friend of mine who has a family of eleven to keep in order—the greater number boys and babies—and who performs her difficult task to admiration, informs me, that one day *shoes* are looked over, and another day *boy's clothes*, and so on with other articles, which are either at once repaired at home or sent to be mended ; by which means all are tidy and comfortable, and the disappointing discoveries of unlucky dilapidations in what is wanted for general wear or particular occasions are happily prevented : the saving of *temper* as well as *time* by such management is incalculable.

In needle-work, it is especially advisable that the fact of no one person being able to do everything, should direct the exertions of the mistress of a family towards those things which are most profitable and essential to be done. Few persons in the middle classes can or need do *all* the work of an increasing family at home, and much of the comfort and economy of the clothing department depends upon their choice of what they shall do themselves, and what they shall put out. Some ladies occupy the chief part of their time, satisfy their most scrupulous consciences, and obtain the unqualified approbation of their friends and relatives, by devoting themselves *exclusively* to stocking-mending. This one branch of their domestic duties throws every other into the shade, and forms an excuse for whatever else, is *not* done in the establishment. "I have always so many stockings on hand, the children have not a sock to their feet, until I mend them ; I should like, if possible, to make these last another year ;" this forms the burden of their song, as piles of ancient and *holey* socks and stockings, only worth darning again *because* they have been so curiously and furiously darned before, form the

constant burden of their work-baskets, dangle on the backs of chairs, cover over beds and tables, and only seem to shun the *inside* of the drawers, where, somehow or other, ladies who are not *merely* stocking-menders, have the stockings for *their* families rolled up and ready to put on. Go where you will, turn where you will, nothing but stockings meets your eye ; so much so, that you are almost tempted to believe that, as in certain fairy tales, all service was performed by *hands*, unconnected with anybody's body ; in like manner, all the near relations of these devoted stocking-menders must consist entirely of *legs*. Heavy bills for wearing apparel in general, and the frequently shabby and neglected appearance of the rest of the *whole* individuals belonging to the *legs*, contradict this presumption, and suggest the idea, that although the mending of stockings is both laudable and necessary, *in a degree*, it may, like other good things, be carried to excess, and become the cause of, as it is too often, the excuse for far more valuable articles hastening to wrack and ruin. Indeed, I have never been able to comprehend why *the right* of stockings to come to a *natural* termination, after a reasonable period of usefulness, a right which is conceded without question to every other item of our mortal clothing,—should be so pertinaciously contested by many whose domestic life is really a martyrdom to the *unnatural* prolongation of the existence of all the stockings in their families ! They and their children have *continually* new *bonnets*, new *linen*, new *dresses*, and new *shoes* ; why should not they *occasionally* have new *stockings* ? Of all that is bought in the way of dress, they now cost the *least* money to purchase *new*, and the most labour and sorrow to keep decent old ; and yet the ancient date

of the stockings in many an expensively dressed family, and the valuable time that has been expended in their preservation, would induce the belief that new ones could hardly be obtained for love or money, or that *the best part of the life of the mother of a family was not too much to be given to the worst garments in the house*. When circumstances are such that no new clothes of any kind can be purchased, of course it is highly creditable to *keep on* mending the old ones; but where this is not the case, it will be found *more* economical to have a certain portion of new stockings every year, and to give the time that would have been expended on the old ones, to the preservation of things of greater value, and that it would cost the purchase of several dozen pairs of stockings to replace.

The above observations are equally applicable to other cheap articles of clothing; which, now that they cost *half* the money that they used to do, may be reasonably expected to disappear from their scene of usefulness a little sooner than when they cost *as much again*. Whenever the *constant repairing* of these, demands more time than would suffice to *make* new, it is well to replace them, and convert the articles no longer *worth* mending into some household cloth or clothing-piece for which their better parts may yet be fit.

The procuring *good and available smaller garments* from *partially worn and shabby larger ones* is the most profitable object on which female industry can be exercised in a family; it will save pounds and appearances; whilst the constant mending of things not worth the time and thread bestowed on them can only be justified by that necessity which, having *no choice*, can incur no censure.

## CHAPTER VII.

DUTIES OF THE MISTRESS OF A FAMILY; subject continued.—What work is best given out.—Preventive assistance to “Distressed Needlewomen.”—Shopping and marketing.—Any husband who will order his own dinner *discreetly* to be encouraged.—Clear understanding as to what each person is expected to undertake.—DOUBTFUL HELP A CERTAIN HINDRANCE.—No real kindness to do for servants what they can comfortably do themselves. The superior manner and spirit of whatever “Missus Moes” the best practical instruction for her maids.—Attention to all a husband will require *when* he comes home, *before* his return.—The sum of the whole matter.—The duty of a housewife in regard to every spiritual and temporal comfort in her keeping is, to endeavour that there may be nothing wasted, nothing wanted; but all employed, and all enjoyed.

SUCH work as millinery, dress-making, and new plain-work, where money is more readily obtained than leisure, is better put out; and let it be given to deserving women who are able and willing to do it *themselves*, and to whom *properly remunerated occupation* is the *only* boon that needs be offered, if too many unthinking or ostentatiously liberal persons were not *less* disposed to *pay* in *ordinary justice*, than to *give away* in *extraordinary charity*. “We are all members one of another;” and those families who are above want themselves, are called upon to minister to the wants of their poorer neighbours. Now, there is no better way of doing this, *for both parties*, than to give suitable employment and liberal and prompt payment to persons who can do well and quickly what others, with different avocations, would perform ill

or with difficulty. To give work to those whose industry procures them bread is of far greater benefit to the individuals themselves, and to society at large, than to do the work at home, and *then* give charitable assistance to the very persons whom you thus deprive of the employment which would *prevent* their becoming objects of charity. The portion devoted to benevolent purposes, which every Christian matron would be desirous of securing, even from a moderate income—may be well and conscientiously *partly* employed in *preventively* lessening the number of “distressed needlewomen,” by giving out work that, *but for this consideration*, would have been done at home. The comfort of having things done out of hand that would, otherwise, have been a long time about, and done but indifferently at last, will afford agreeable illustration of the truth that “kindness to our neighbour is kindness to ourselves.”

A large family of daughters, whose dress must be limited by their own industry, will, of course, modify the application of this advice; and, in general, *every* woman should have a *practical knowledge of woman's work*, not only that she may do it herself in case of need, but that she may be a competent judge and liberal pay-mistress of what is done by others.

SHOPPING AND MARKETING should be attended to by the mistress, if possible. Not only does she get better served by going herself; but, as *gossiping* with tradespeople will not be the temptation to the mistress that it is to the maids, the business will be much more speedily accomplished by *her* than by *them*. Going to market herself, also, will save her from that health-destroying confinement which so many housewives mention, half boastingly, and half lamentingly, saying

that "they never find a moment to get out from one week's end to the other." Accompanying mamma on these occasions is a pleasure to most children; the morning walk may be combined with it, and the maids left to the more speedy performance of their *regular* work; whereas, if *they* have to go out their work must get behindhand, and mother and children lose the exercise so essential to the health and well-being of all. An *occasional* errand for the domestics, by means of which they, in their turn, may *inhale* a little fresh air, and *exhale* some of "the perilous stuff" which, if not communicated to our equals, is apt "to prey upon the heart," is both unavoidable and desirable; but the temptation to *stay* out, *when* out, being one of the greatest to which they are liable, they should not *constantly* be exposed to it.

Of all the shops that a lady enters, none is at once so disagreeable or so profitable to visit *in person* as the butcher's; in no case is the difference between what is *seen* or *not seen before ordered*, so much felt. Sometimes the *gentleman* of the family has no objection to take this part of her duty off the lady's hands; and, if so, she is, in *one* considerable item of domestic comfort, an enviable woman; for, next to those *most amiable and convenient men* who are contented to eat *anything*, and far beyond the *exacting and voracious men* who are not contented although they eat up *everything*, the objects of their especial animadversions *not* excluded,—are the gentlemen who, being *rather* particular as to the provision of their table, *prefer* going to the butcher's themselves; and always order in the fish and poultry. Of course, such an understanding should exist between the lady and the gentleman on the subject, as will prevent the

"more than anybody in the world knows what to do with,"—which, in certain unlucky families, alternates so perplexingly with "nothing whatever in the house, and all sorts of people dropping in to dinner." But where the gentleman will go *regularly* to market and secure unto himself something with which he must *necessarily* be satisfied, or at which he *cannot* grumble, his doing so is an essential comfort, and he has a full right to be considered and encouraged as a praiseworthy individual.

In a family where the service is very limited, many smaller duties and daily occupations must fall to the share of the mistress, besides those above specified; and it is essential that she should select for her own performance what she can do with the greatest ease, and what a servant would do with less exactness and the greatest interruption to her heavier employments. As clean hands and dirty work can hardly be demanded at the same time, answering the door, laying the cloth, dusting books or chimney ornaments, making beds, and similar services, may well be expected from the ladies of the house, *at busy times*, where only one servant is kept, or where children entirely occupy the time of a second; but then it must be clearly ascertained what the mistress *intends doing* and what she *expects done*, or else, as I have too often seen, mistress and maid will only be in each other's way—perhaps run the risk of knocking each other over in their accelerated rush to the passage, at the last impatient summons to the street-door, where the belief of each that *the other* would be *sure* to go, has kept the unlucky visitor in increasing suspense as to his ever being admitted at all. DOUBTFUL HELP BEING A CERTAIN HINDRANCE, no assistance should be

offered by one party that is not clearly understood, and may not be thoroughly depended on by the other. It is, however, *no* kindness to servants to do *for* them what they can *comfortably do themselves*, or *learn* to do with a little patient teaching. Spoiling servants has the same effect as spoiling children, it neither excites their gratitude nor contributes to their happiness; but there are seasons when they require assistance, and then it should be freely granted.

In all that the lady undertakes, the quietness, neatness, despatch, and consideration of the performance should serve as *an example to her household*. THE OBSERVING EYE, THE CALCULATING HEAD, THE SKILFUL HAND, THE CONCISE SPEECH, THE GENTLE STEP, THE EXTERNAL TIDINESS, THE INTERNAL PURIFICATION, THE USE OF AS MUCH AS IS WANTED AND NO MORE, AND THE CONSCIENTIOUS CLEARING AWAY OF WHAT IS USED—ALL THIS SHOULD BE CONSPICUOUS IN “WHAT-EVER MISSUS DOES,” HER SILENT PRACTICE OF THE BEST WAY OF DOING THINGS BEING WORTH ALL THE “TELLING OVER AND OVER AGAIN” IN THE WORLD. In too many instances, half the dirt upon the floor, the greater part of the litter on the tables, the careless use and disqualification of jugs, basins, etc., and *all* the noise, clacking, bawling, self-commendation and neighbourly vituperation, that render a moment’s peace for anybody in the house quite out of the question, are accounted for and excused by “missus being busy in the kitchen.” Where *such* effects are produced by her presence, it is no wonder if “missus” is *not* liked in the kitchen; and, instead of being considered as a *help*, she is voted “*quite the contrary*.”

In conclusion, let me *especially* recommend to the



young wife a considerate attention to whatever *her husband* will require *when* he comes home *before* he comes home; in order that, on his return, she may have nothing to do but to share in the comfort and enjoyment for which she has provided, and may *not* be running about after his usual and reasonable requirements, exposed to his reproaches for her negligence, and to those of her own conscience, if she have any. A large volume might be written on the subject of the present chapter; but so many abler authors than myself have chosen it for their theme, that I have contented myself with such remarks as I do not remember to have met with previously, or which, if they *have* been made before, are of sufficient importance to deserve a second reading.

The sum of the whole matter,—of all that any one *has* ever said or may say on the subject is simply this,—that the duty of a mistress, in regard to time, room, food, clothing, comfort, health, temper, and every temporal and spiritual good under her administration,—is to endeavour that there may be

NOTHING WASTED,  
NOTHING WANTED; ;  
but  
ALL EMPLOYED,  
ALL ENJOYED.

NOTE.—As the author, whilst duly mindful of the rights and comforts of “the superior sex,” is especially desirous that no blame, lawfully belonging to *any man*, should, unlawfully, be laid on *any woman*, she is induced to remind the public that *there are gentlemen*—very amiable and excellent in other respects—who—totally regardless of their own station in life, or the domestic reputation of their ladies—*persist* in “going about such

*figures*" that few would believe in the exemplary industry or zealous admonitions constantly expended in the vain endeavour to "keep them decent." Several touching representations have been made to the author by the hapless connections of these amateur "old-clothes men," and *one* admirable housewife, who, in reply to the advice that she should *give away* the most discreditable pieces in her husband's wardrobe, asserts that, on all his large estates, she cannot find any one shabby enough to accept his—not *cast off*—alas! but *dropping off* old garments—wishes to know if, in so aggravated a case, Home Truths, being in high favour with the gentlemen, could not become a medium of her own justification by its *particularly* advertising *her* lord and master as subject to this infirmity. In answer to the above proposition, the author begs to assure the much-tried applicant of her entire commiseration, but to suggest the consolatory consideration that ladies whose public credit is so greatly advanced by their connection with "new-clothes men" (persons who fancy they have never anything *good* enough to wear) have their own peculiar trials. She hopes, however, that *any* gentleman reader, feeling himself guilty in *either* of the forms alluded to in the present note, will have the grace and candour to confess his wife's innocence and his own error.

For any *more* personal exposure of a husband's foibles in her volume, the author's fee is £100,000; this high figure "not resulting from any mercenary motives on her part (half-guineas in Queen's heads would pay infinitely better), but merely given to make it obvious even to the meanest capacity" that publishing the frailties of a husband, although in self-defence, is always to the wife, "*a ruinous concern.*"



## CHAPTER VIII.

**SERVICE.**—Who waits at table where there are several guests and small attendance; dumb waiters are exploded, and gentility forbids any one helping himself or his neighbour! Unless continual running about in nervous confusion can be designated waiting, no *servant* ever waits on these occasions; whilst all the guests wait the greater part of the meal for most of the things they want.—Simple arrangements by means of which, without additional service, fish need not be eaten without sauce, nor beef without mustard, nor gooseberry tart without sugar.—Page in a Highland family.—Making children useful the most effectual way of amusing them, as well as keeping them out of mischief.

“Who waits at table!” repeats Mrs. A., a lady who begins housekeeping with one servant, but remembering that her mother “lived in style,” would think it a disgrace to her establishment that any one should help himself to a potato. “*The cook* stays to wait, after she has brought up dinner; or, when we have a few friends, my mother sends her footman.”

“Who waits at table!” repeats Mrs. B., who has just set up a second servant: “*the parlour-maid*, of course; but if we have a large party, we hire a waiter.”

“Who waits at table!” repeats Mrs. C., who has actually so covered up an *awkward boy* with tags and buttons that his own mother scarcely recognizes the *smart page*, with whom Mrs. C. astonishes the neighbourhood. “Who waits! the page, when we are a small party,—or, when we have much company, I get some

one to cook and have an eye to the children—and then Mary and Nurse come in as well.”

“Who waits at table!” repeat the several *guests* at the several tables of Mesdames A. B. and C. “Why, unless continual running about in nervous confusion can be designated waiting, no *servant* ever waited at the tables of any of these ladies; but almost all the *guests* wait almost all dinner-time for whatever is most wanted. Fish is eaten without sauce, game without gravy, gooseberry tart without sugar. Anything *you* ask for is taken to your neighbour, all that *your neighbour* asks for, and that you dare not pass on to him, is presented over and over again to *you*, and everybody waits till he gets home to obtain something hot and comfortable as consolation for “the misery of dining out.”

But how does Mrs. D. manage? She has but two servants; and yet the most agreeable dinners as well as the most agreeable people are always to be found at her house. An additional servant, belonging to one of her guests, is all she has at her largest parties; and, for their usual number of eight, the housemaid at the D.’s is the only person in attendance, and no guest wants for anything, nor waits a minute longer than is agreeable. Now, it appears to me that Mrs. D.’s secret is well worth knowing; and I transcribe it for all sensible young women who prefer real comfort to imaginary style.

First, Mr. and Mrs. D., being pleasant, unaffected, and intellectual people themselves, have, amongst their friends and acquaintances, several who are pleasant, unaffected, and intellectual likewise; and thus, it is easy for them to assemble an agreeable circle round their table,—guests who can *say* good things as well as *eat* them, and who, if they do not partake of a first course,

will be cheerful and patient till the arrival of the second ; this, in itself, is a great matter. Then Mr. and Mrs. D. are known to be punctual, and to *take it for granted* that any one, unavoidably detained beyond the appointed hour, would be *very sorry* to keep the rest of the party waiting ; the dinner is therefore served *when* it is ready and in perfection, and any belated friend, who slips in afterwards, has a kind smile and a hot plate reserved for him amongst the punctual guests already seated, and escapes all the cross looks and *reverse* of benedictions, of which he must have been the conscious subject, had hungry people waited to be angry people, and then sat down to a dinner spoiled *for all parties* upon his account.

The guests assembling duly, and dinner being served *when* it is ready, so that people may begin to eat before they begin to yawn, will always contribute to the general satisfaction.

The place of each person is assigned by the hostess ; and if the party is numerous, the name of each is written on a card, so that the guests may seat themselves in the appointed order, which is that in which they will be helped, without *any other* regard to precedence. Bread is folded up in each napkin, wine and water stand between each couple, salt and the condiments usually required with what is to be brought to table, are within everybody's reach or easy passing ; duplicate small castors contain cayenne and fish sauces, and are placed on each side of the table ; and as many changes of knives and forks as there are courses, are laid for each. For all that is to be helped by the host and hostess, no empty plate is set before the guests ; hot plates are placed before, and filled by the carver, and carried away to each

guest in succession. The appropriate sauce or gravy stands by the *first person* served, who helps himself and passes it on. Vegetables also are passed round by the guests themselves. Whatever addition, such as tongue, ham, etc., may be eaten with the chief dish, is handed round in suitable slices ; so that, excepting when a second help is required, in which case should the waiter be engaged, anybody is supposed capable of holding anybody's plate, very few plates are carried *about* before they are taken away, and the servants who have not to bring pepper, mustard, etc., have time to attend to any guest who may require something not already on the table, and not wished for by others, such as beer, etc. Where *dishes* are to be *handed*, a plate is then furnished to each person, and for the change of plates, there is no more simple or expeditious way than the foreign fashion of a servant going round with the necessary number, and depositing the plate that has been used at the top, giving a clean one from the bottom of her pile. The quietly *going round* with what is wanted is always better than *running backwards and forwards*, and will enable one servant to perform with ease what several would, otherwise, accomplish with difficulty.

A hostess who wishes that her friends should enjoy their dinner, and that she also should enjoy it with them, must see that all is ready and at hand, *before* her guests arrive. If her servants are well-trained, and accustomed to do things regularly, *when* there is *no* company, there will be little difficulty when there *is* ; and if there is that pleasant understanding between the head and hands of the household which should always exist, any casual mistake will easily be rectified ; an accident itself will occasion more fun than fuss ; and, although no host and

hostess should feel as unconcerned or indifferent at their own table as elsewhere, the duty of seeing that nobody wants anything will be manifestly a pleasant one, whilst the simple cordiality which delights in good appetites and cheerful countenances, and the domestic order which is evidently, but unostentatiously, the presiding genius of the family, will go far to enhance the flavour of the simplest fare. Who would not prefer one or two plain popular dishes, hot, well-cooked, and served with their proper appurtenances, to a number of so-called *made-dishes*, unsuitable to the condition and the cooks of those who offer them, and *tasting strongly of the labour and sorrow* with which they were concocted and served up, but of *very little else*.

Being able to carve and help whatever comes to table skilfully and expeditiously, is a great advantage, and the art of doing this must be acquired both by observation and practice. Heading a table, and "doing the honours" gracefully, should be part of every woman's home education; and mammas who have set an example *how* the thing should be done, will do well to vacate their seats occasionally in favour of their daughters, and to be indulgent to their first awkward imitations, until practice shall have made *them* perfect also.

IT CANNOT BE TOO STRONGLY IMPRESSED UPON PARENTS, THAT MAKING THEIR CHILDREN HANDY AND USEFUL TO THEMSELVES AND OTHERS IS THE BEST WAY OF MAKING THEM HAPPY AND CONTENTED, AND SAVING THEM FROM THAT PITIABLE STATE FOR YOUNG AND OLD—THE "NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO." The necessity of labour, which was imposed upon the first man, is intuitively recognised by all his descendants, as soon as the helplessness of infancy is past. Children

want to be occupied, and to amuse them for long together without occupation is impossible ; and not only do they require to be occupied, but, as if conscious of the merciful intention of the sentence under which they lie, they want to be occupied *to some purpose*, to share in the employments and the aim of their elders ; and it is simply owing to impatience with their first efforts, that so many young things, who would otherwise have been blithe and merry *helps* in a numerous family, grow up to be weary and melancholy *hindrances*.

"To be sure, how neat, and nice, and happy you all look !" said a comparatively rich woman, with four children, to a poor woman with nine, "how in the world do you contrive?" "Well, there's plenty to do, certainly, but then there are plenty of hands to do it ; one does one thing, and one does another, and so we get through cheerily ; and we have all our health, thank God, which is a great matter."

The comparatively rich woman returns to her four fretful mischievous *nuisances* at home, and wonders how *an additional five pair of hands* can be produced as a *reason* for cleanliness and comfort ; or, if the truth should dawn upon her, she regrets that the *rank* of her children will not allow them to wash dishes, sweep floors, run of errands, or pick up sticks, like those of her neighbour. But, as every increase of this world's possessions is accompanied by a *corresponding* increase of care and occupation, suitable employment may be found for the young *in all classes* ; and, especially in the middle station, may the young people in a family be rendered happy by being made useful.

The singular infatuation by which girls are brought up in helpless ignorance of all that is most essential in



domestic economy, whilst time and money are lavishly bestowed on the acquisition of a *smattering* of accomplishments for which they have no taste, and for the exercise of which many will have no opportunity, is a great evil in society. Mothers, who have the good sense to avoid it, and to permit the cultivation of accomplishments as a relaxation *after* the business of life is duly attended to—giving masters as a *reward* for self-improvement in any art for which taste or talent is evinced—will have these very accomplishments in *greater* perfection in *their* families, than if, like many others, they had considered them the chief object in their daughters' education—that for which everything else was to be set aside or sacrificed.

In a German parsonage, I have known the eldest daughter of the house to prepare the dishes brought to table, whilst the younger waited on her father's guests; and, in the evening, the labours of the day concluded, the young ladies—for such they were in intellect, refinement and appearance—took their part in the family concert; their performance being as superior to that of most of the pupils of our expensive schools, as good sense, harmony, and genius will ever be to affectation, discord, and stupidity. But, notwithstanding the frequent instances of mistaken views in regard to education in our middle classes, there is no occasion to cross the channel for examples of usefulness, happiness, and accomplishments *combined*: the same nimble, skilful fingers, that make the pretty frocks of baby-sisters, or furnish the best cake and lightest pastry for a birthday feast, can guide the pencil with an artist's talent; children of ten years of age, who promise to play very well, with a very moderate amount of home instruction,

have kept the housekeeping accounts during mamma's illness, without any detriment to their childish merriment when mamma was happily *about again*; and many a sweet infant voice and beaming infant countenance can heart and memory recall, connected with employments and enjoyments thus wisely and pleasantly united.

I conclude this chapter with *a fact* that may serve as a useful hint to any lady who, having more children than servants, would be glad to set up a "pretty page," if she could afford it. A gentleman in the Highlands, whose eldest hope is exactly of the age to get into mischief during a late dinner, if not one of the party, has revived the old fashion of causing the younger members of his family to wait on the elder. The young laird, in the full costume of his clan and country, is seen standing at the sideboard as the guests enter the dining-room, and assists in waiting on them until the cloth is removed, when he is allowed to take his place at table and partake of the desert.

Surely, having such a "pretty page" as this, appointed according to the spirit of chivalric institutions, and saving a boy from the dangers of kitchen company or selfish indolence, is much more "aristocratic" as well as advantageous, than adding to the expenses and vulgarity of an establishment, a specimen of the very "tag-rag and bob-tail" that many persons who desire to live "in a certain style," affect to raise themselves above.

N.B. These observations are not intended to discourage any who have the opportunity and the kindness to employ a poor boy, suitably appointed, in their households. WHOEVER GIVES TO SOCIETY A WELL-TRAINED AND USEFUL SERVANT DOES GREAT GOOD IN HIS GENERATION; but all who merely increase the number of idle loungers in the lower classes, add not only to the vanity but to the vice of "the world we live in."

## CHAPTER IX.

SMALL MATTERS, BUT GREAT COMFORTS.—A supply of change.

—Reckoning with servants made easy by being made regular.

—Examples of two different systems.—A stated day in the week for ascertaining what articles of constant requisition are wanted, and must be had in.—Unnecessary burden laid upon Saturday.—What kinds of work should be done first.—False and proper shame in regard to jobs before company.—Mistaken and premature bringing down and leaving about of things *to be* done, before they can be attended to, a great cause of confusion.—Preparation of what may be wanted in sickness.

1. HAVE a supply of change at hand, shillings, sixpences, and halfpence. This will obviate the various inconveniences of keeping people at the door, sending out at unreasonable times, and running or calling after any inmate in the house, supposed to be better provided with "the needful." The tradespeople with whom you regularly deal, will always give you extra change *when* you are making purchases or paying bills; whilst those to whom you apply for it, on a sudden emergency, may neither be willing nor able to do so. Some housekeepers object to this arrangement, that, "as soon as five-pound notes or sovereigns are changed, they always seem to go, without their understanding how;" but to such persons I would humbly insinuate, that this is rather the fault of their *not getting understanding*, than any inevitable consequence of *getting change*. The fact is, that it is the necessity of parting with your money which obliges you to get the larger pieces changed, and

*not* the circumstance of having smaller coin that *necessitates* your parting with your money, though it certainly *facilitates* your doing so, when the necessity arrives. However, as it is easier to count a few sovereigns than many shillings, and loose money is most objectionable, it is well to put up reserve change in small collective packets, and to replenish the housekeeping purse from these, daily, or weekly, as may be most convenient.

II. If money for daily expenses has to pass through the hands of a common domestic, it is a time-and-trouble-saving plan to settle with her *every* night, and to make up her cash in hand to a certain *similar* sum. This will prevent such puzzling calculations as the following: "Let me see, I gave you 10*s.* on Saturday, and 9*d.* the day before. Was it 9*d.*? No, it must have been 11*d.*, for I gave you a shilling and you gave me a penny out for the beggar; then there was 5*s.* 6*d.* on Monday, and 8*d.* you owed me from last month; and then the 1*s.* 6*d.* your master gave you for the parcel—you brought him 2*d.* back—and 3½*d.* out of the butcher's bill; no, *you* had to give 3½*d.* to the butcher, but you came to me for the ½*d.*, and I had no coppers, so we still owe him the ½*d.*—by the way, don't forget to pay him the next time you go. Then there's the baker—no, I paid the baker myself, and I *think* the housemaid paid the butterman; but you got in the cheese the day before, and I have a sort of a recollection that I may possibly owe you for *that*, all but a few pence you must have had left of mine, that I told you to take from off the chimney-piece. Well, cook, I think that's *nearly* all! now, how do your accounts stand?"

This the poor cook, who *is* a cook, and *not* a conjuror, finds it no easy matter to discover; all that she is quite

certain of is, that her disbursements have something exceeded her receipts; and being an honest woman, though a poor one, she wishes to cheat neither her mistress nor herself; but what with her memory and her want of it, her involved payments and different receipts, what she owed her mistress, and what her mistress owes her, what she got from her master, and what was partly settled by the housemaid, the balance from the butcher's bill, and the intricacies of the cheese account, the poor woman is perfectly bewildered. She counts again and again; recapitulates her mistress' data and her own; sums up backwards and forwards, and endeavours to explain the differences between them; then, if she can read and write, she brings her slate to "explain her explanation," and the united calculations of maid and mistress, which are, after all, entirely unavailing to produce a correct account, probably consume more time, and are expressed in more words than would suffice to fill another volume like the present. Two minutes' daily reckoning from a *regular* sum in hand, would do the business effectually, and prevent either party from being out of pocket or out of temper. Thus, for instance, the maid has her usual sum of five shillings to account for; she pays during the day, for—

|                                | s. | d.    |
|--------------------------------|----|-------|
| Bread . . . . .                | 1  | 9     |
| Beer . . . . .                 | 0  | 6     |
| Vegetables and fruit . . . . . | 0  | 10    |
| Milk . . . . .                 | 0  | 4     |
| Matches . . . . .              | 0  | 1     |
| Parcel . . . . .               | 1  | 0     |
|                                |    | <hr/> |
| Total . . . . .                | 4  | 6     |

This is easily reckoned, even by the unlearned: the mistress enters the items in her day-book, takes the

remaining sixpence, and again gives her servant five shillings, in convenient change, to be as readily accounted for on the succeeding day.

III. Have a stated day in the week for ascertaining what articles in constant requisition in a family must be got in, and let not that day be Saturday. I never could understand why Saturday, which, as a preparation-day for Sunday, has already its own extra cares and employments, should, furthermore, be burdened by duties that can be much more easily attended to on any other day of the week. Excepting for such articles of food as will not keep, or are much better fresh, Saturday is the worst possible day for shopping. The shops are full, and customers must, consequently, wait in order to be served; the errand-boys are busy, and goods must, therefore, wait to be sent, perhaps to a wrong house, or they are forgotten altogether; and as this is only found out late on Saturday night, and there is no redress on Sunday morning, the day which should be a season of holy and salutary rest and peace, is too often one of disappointment and vexation, and that merely on account of the non-arrival of something on the Saturday night, which could have been much more easily obtained on any of the other days of the week. That *things*, as well as *persons*, should be made to look their best upon the Lord's Day, is advisable and praiseworthy; and to insure this, whatever is likely to be soiled by a day's wear or treading on, must be cleaned, or at least have an additional "rub up" on Saturday; but, in proportion as this is necessary, every other act of periodical or occasional cleaning, "routing," washing, ironing, mending and making, had better be done *in advance of Saturday*, or left till *after Sunday*. But

linen comes, or *ought* to come, from the wash, shoes come from the shoemaker, suits of clothes from the tailor, gowns from the dressmaker, groceries from the grocer, candles from the tallow-chandler, meat from the butcher; and should the meat be pork, perchance the maid is sent out, after the shops are shut, in order that the Sunday's dinner may not be disturbed, as it too often has been, by the gentleman's discovering that his lady, whilst gratifying his taste for pork, has forgotten, "as she always does forget," that he never cares for pork unless he can have mustard. But, in addition to the "hurry-scurry" produced by all the things that *do* come and do *not* come on the Saturday, bonnets are to be trimmed, gloves are to be mended, caps are to be made, socks and collars are to be washed out, clothes to be brushed, shoes to be blacked, etc., and this—which is excusable enough where no member of the family has more than one thing off and the other thing on, and no time but Saturday afternoon—takes place amongst persons who have *many* different garments, and every day of the week at their disposal. Surely this overloading of the ancient Sabbath *is not right*; and, like everything that is not right, it is happily, *not necessary*.

iv. If more linen comes home on Saturday than can be conveniently looked over, aired off, and put away, it had better be covered up and left in the baskets till Monday. When the laundress has *suitable* accommodation for keeping what she must bring till she fetches the other clothes, it is a saving of time and labour to both parties that she should do so. The day that must be partly occupied by sending the clothes *to* the wash, may as well be devoted to attending to the clothes that come *from* the wash. The "stitches in time" can be put in

at once, and the articles not so speedily despatched may be reserved for the week's work ; "*the larger things, which do not want much, but which may be much wanted,*" always taking precedence of "*little fiddling jobs, which occupy a great deal of time, and which it don't particularly signify whether they are done or no.*"

N.B. The less these "little fiddling jobs, which take up a great deal of time, and don't particularly signify," are encouraged, in a world where there is so much that *must* be done, the better. Nothing is more delightful to Muddle than to see them "niggled over," whilst work of easy execution, and essential to cleanliness and order, lies lumbering and neglected.

v. As there are some kinds of work that can be taken up and laid down at any time, so there are others which can only be done effectively when you can *sit to them*, without being called off. There are few women, whose husbands are out for any considerable portion of the day, who cannot, with a little management, command an uninterrupted hour ; why should not this hour be devoted to the work that requires sitting to, instead of its being dragged about at those times and under those circumstances, which allow of its being *dragged about*, but of nothing else ? Under this head, may be noticed the expediency of doing such domestic jobs as company would be sorry to interrupt, and that you would not wish company to see, in some room in which company will not be shown. In summer this is easily accomplished ; and even in winter, when an extra fire might be entailed on you, the "bit of coal" will be well bestowed if it enables you to perform with all confidence and expedition, what, in your receiving room, would be an occasion of fearful popping up and down to see if



any one was coming, and of hurried, and very likely, unavailing scuffling away of persons, and confusion of things, when, in spite of precautionary watchings, and deprecatory wishes, the *very people* that you hoped would keep away, do actually come. As to all such homely employments as unexpected visitors might witness, without perceiving anything requiring concealment, no well-bred woman will attempt to hide them, nor suffer old friends to feel themselves interruptions to what *must* be done, or of less importance than what *might* be done at any time : in these cases, as there is "no sin," there should be "no shame;" but, *needlessly*, to bring into a sitting-room what propriety would confine to a dressing-room or nursery, *is* a sin, and people are quite right to be ashamed of it.

VI. However necessary and laudable foresight and preparation are, in the general way, there *is* a species of getting ready beforehand which is decidedly objectionable. I allude to that of prematurely dragging from their respective resting-places such articles of use and clothing as *are* to be mended, *were* to be brushed, *ought* to be sent, or *are intended* to be cleaned. By thus bringing them into notice *before* any available attention can be bestowed on them, the trouble of fetching them, when wanted, is certainly avoided; and as the bringer further urges, by leaving them in sight, "she is certain to remember them." But, alas! she is equally "certain" not to do anything to them a moment before that in which they are wanted to be put on, or otherwise ultimately disposed of; and, in the mean time, they lie about "lumbering and littering," getting more ragged, more dusty, more unmendable, and acknowledged as reproachful nuisances by everybody. Would not it be

far better to *think* of what is to be done beforehand, but not to cumber up the common field of action with jobs *to be done before* they can be attended to? An extra run up-stairs, to take up what is finished, and bring down what is to be next begun, will be far more healthy, and actually less troublesome, than to be constantly clearing tables, chairs, and floors from the things that are in everybody's way, with no more chance of being attended to than if they were comfortably out of sight.

VII. Old linen, flannel, or other articles that may be called for in cases of accident or sickness, should be comprised in the domestic stores. Like making a will or taking an umbrella, these precautionary measures—as closely allied to care and prayer—seem to have a power to avert or to delay the danger recognised, and no one needs to shun them.



## CHAPTER X.

SMALL MATTERS AND GREAT COMFORTS.—Convenience as well as kindness of employing workpeople *when* they have most leisure to serve you.—Economy and comfort of having seasonable garments ready for each season.—What is wanted after it is dark to be got in or prepared whilst it is yet light.—“Light in our dwellings.”—Doing what is to be done at once.—All that is capable of being easily cured should not be needlessly endured.—Relative situations of things much or little wanted.—Hoarding for hoarding sake an evil and a sin.—Getting children ready for a walk.—Nothing to be put away dirty that can possibly be put by clean.—*Prevention* of inkstains.—Separate portfolio for papers requiring immediate attention.—Classification of bills, letters, etc.—Envelopes and India-rubber rings.—Book of directions.—Paper and string.—Conscientious return of books.

VIII. THERE are seasons when dress-makers, dyers, upholsterers, etc., are so *overdone* with work, that they, necessarily, keep you waiting; and others, when, as work would be most acceptable *to them*, they can let you have it *out of hand*. Surely, to employ persons when they can best attend to you, is kind to yourself as well as to them. Especially, where there are children, it is well to be in advance of the season when *everybody* wants summer or winter clothing, and not, like too many, have every comfortable and seasonable garment out, *being made*, when each intended possessor would be the better for its *being worn*. For want of forethought in this respect, we see whole families suffocated beneath their dark merino dresses and velvet bonnets, in the sun and

dust of May ; and again, have our wonder and sympathies excited by their winter colds and summer clothing, in the fogs and dirt of November. Not until summer actually *came*, did they "*see about*" their lighter raiment ; and as autumn was fast approaching, by the time their muslins were all ready, so winter must be thoroughly *set in*, before they *see about* more comfortable clothing ; and thus each season overtakes and leaves them *seeing about* what will be unseasonable when it is put on ; and for want of which, meanwhile, they are suffering in comfort, health, and *substance* ; summer-wear being most injurious to winter-clothing, even as winter weather is destruction to all summer garments. Would not it be better to provide for each season *in prospect*, than to be always unprovided when it really comes ? The provident always look comfortable and well-dressed, the unseasonably attired always look miserable and shabby. It is scarcely necessary to remind all who have common sense, and no uncommon riches, that in this changeable climate, it is most advisable to have a bad-weather costume, which not only saves costlier or gayer dresses, but *looks infinitely better* on a rainy or dirty day than all the finery that was ever sacrificed to the want of such precaution. The trouble of putting on another gown, or pinning-up beneath a water-proof, is well rewarded by the comfort and *beauty* of unsoiled garments at home or in fine weather.

IX. Let all things that will be wanted, after it is dark, be got in and got ready *whilst* it is yet light. Coal, candles, wood and water are of this class ; and no one who has ever witnessed the difficulty, dirt, and danger belonging to getting such things with one hand—the other being employed in tilting a candlestick so

as to drop the grease about from a candle more likely to *set* light than to *give* it—can, I think, question the economy, cleanliness, and comfort of what common sense would recommend in preference.

x. As nothing wastes candles so much as carrying them about, and nothing places glass and crockery in greater jeopardy than attempting to move them in the dark, it will cost very little more money, and secure a vast deal more comfort, to have an economical light burning in the passage during the gloomy winter evenings, than to do without it. If it be such a one as *may* be carried up-stairs, it will save the lighting another when its absence does not signify; but, supposing its chief use—lighting the passage, and enabling persons to go about in comfort and security—confines it to its proper place, its cost will be money well bestowed; and I doubt much if housekeepers who begrudge this great and cheerful convenience are really any richer at the year's end, than others who, in the spirit of Scriptural liberality, allow themselves and their families the blessing of "light in their dwellings."

xi. There are several small domestic duties and occupations which, like the stitch in time, are much more easily and effectually performed, *if done at once*, than if they are at all postponed. The airing of bed and bed-room, and ventilation of dining-room, *immediately* after leaving them; the sweeping up or clearing away of crumbs, mud, dust, or whatever might be trodden in, or blown yet further, if 'tis left; the pasting up of torn or falling paper; the taking out of stains or grease; the glueing on portions of fractured furniture, that might, otherwise, get rubbed or lost; and the putting away whatever might be injured, or a cause of injury

and inconvenience, if not cared for ;—all this cannot be too strongly recommended, together with any *prompt* measure which wisely takes from the nervous catalogue of “things to *do*,” and adds to the comfortable list of “duties *done*.” N.B.—The liquid glue and patent paste, which are now so cheap, afford every facility for attending to part of this advice.

XII. The constant exercise of patience and forbearance is never more necessary or praiseworthy than in domestic life ; but there *is* a species of endurance which, as it is quite superfluous, is not at all commendable : I mean the putting up with such daily annoyances as the cost of a few shillings, or the labour of a few minutes, would effectually remove. Narrow means, an inconvenient house, a disagreeable situation, tiresome children, stupid servants ; or, worse than even these, toothache and an ill-tempered husband—these are trials for which patience is the best and almost only remedy, and all who have patience *enough*, under such circumstances, are entitled to our sympathy and admiration. But, in addition to the unavoidable afflictions of their lot—how many go on, from day to day and year to year, with doors that never shut—windows and drawers that nobody can open—keys that will not lock—grates that never draw—blinds that won’t keep up, and curtains that won’t come down—nails that tear their things, and things that tear their nails ; and, whilst professing to be *above noticing such petty grievances*, how many expend *so* much of their stock of patience upon these *unnecessary evils*, that they have scarcely any left for *inevitable annoyances*. Could such persons calculate, at the year’s end, the amount of time and strength expended in daily struggles with only *one* drawer “that always sticks, so that there is the

greatest difficulty in pulling it out ; and, when out, it is all that anybody can ever do to push it in again,"—and, if they could recollect and *believe* the singular verbal manifestations of their *indifference* to "these trifles that no one should make a moment's fuss about, in a world where there is so much real trouble"—it is probable they would be quite as much surprised as those who have long wondered at the perversity which has cherished such needless causes of "botheration" to themselves and others. To ladies who do not perceive any harm in adding to the comforts and diminishing the inconveniences of our mortal life, I recommend the condensed philosophy of the following well-known but little-headed rhymes :—

"For every evil under the sun,  
There *is* a remedy, or there's *none* ;  
If there *is* one, try and find it,  
If there is none, never mind it."

XIII. Let such articles as are "seldom or scarcely ever wanted," but which, if about, are continually adding to daily care or dusting, be put away, and only given out on the rare occasions when they are necessary. Of course, it will be desirable to place whatever is most often in requisition, the most ready to the hand, so as not to have, *constantly*, to move everything in the front of cupboards, before you can get to anything behind. Any common-place-looking parcel, put by in paper or in linen, had better be ticketed, in order to avoid uselessly unwrapping what, if mistaken in regard to the contents, must be wrapped up again. Articles that *never* have been wanted, and are *never likely* to be wanted in your own family, had much better be given to persons to whom they will be useful : "hoarding for hoarding sake"

being enough to bring not only muddle, but heavier calamity into any family: "covetousness being idolatry."

xiv. The getting ready for a daily walk, especially where there are children, will be much facilitated by keeping *every* article each individual will want, neatly put together in *one* place: the outer garment folded underneath, and the bonnet, with gloves and neckerchief beside, laid lightly on the top. Some persons seem to think that bonnets cannot exist, except in bandboxes; and, as these have generally an elevated situation assigned to them, and whoever takes them down seldom stays to put them up again, without their respective bonnets, the bandboxes are no sooner brought lower in the world, than, like their betters, they are exposed to kicks and insults from all parties; then, where the articles in daily use are dispersed, *one* little drawer is opened for the *gloves*, *another* for the *neckerchiefs*, and several other drawers or cupboards are explored for the other things, and as all this takes a great deal of time, and creates a vast deal of noise and confusion, it is no wonder if "the dreadful business of getting several children ready" often prevents their going out at all, or if the nursery, after their departure, should be all litter and disorder. A deep drawer, or the shelf of a closet (in the latter there may be pegs for the pinafores that are taken off), will accommodate several sets of small walking-gear, and whoever is waiting to go out with the children will find such an arrangement a great saving of their patience.

xv. It is very advisable that no article that *can* be put by *clean* should ever be put by *dirty*. The bonnets that have borne the heat and dust of summer, and that must be fresh trimmed before they appear again; the



dressess that are all the worse for winter's wear, and are destined to have new sleeves, *at any rate*, or to be unpicked and turned before they are of any use; these things, and many others, had better be separated from their soiled and useless parts *before* their six months' vacation, than add to the "malaria" of chests and presses, and be objects of offence to sight and smell, whenever they come out again, in order to be pulled to pieces. N.B. Ladies who know how *well* silks and many other materials look, if carefully *washed*, will seldom waste their money in having them dyed, or their time in *turning* the dirt inside. With few exceptions, dyed silks always look shabby, and have an uncomfortable smell; whereas, washed silks may be got up to look nearly as well, and to be quite as clean as ever.

xvi. A safe inkstand, and convenient establishment for writing in each room in which it is constantly or frequently required, will be more effectual for preventing ink-stains, than any receipt will be for getting them out. It is not the *natural*, quiet use of ink, but its *unnatural* locomotion which is generally fatal to floors, dresses, furniture, and carpets. Writing belongs to the stationary department, and no one can run about with its appurtenances without constant risk and occasional damage. These appurtenances are likewise so cheap and commodious now-a-days, and their use so frequent, since the penny postage, that persons who profit by this great convenience, should not begrudge some attention to its requisitions. A *letter-weigher*, tested by that of the postmaster, is an essential appendage to the writing table of all who forward manuscript, and who do not wish to show unnecessary liberality to the Queen's exchequer.

XVII. Have a separate portfolio, or large envelope, inscribed "*Papers to be attended to immediately, or within the present year.*" This kept in a safe but convenient place, and used as a depository for all papers relating to taxes, insurances, etc., will be found most valuable, by preventing the long, anxious, and frequently, useless hunting after documents of importance, which, having *certainly been put away most particularly somewhere*, are, too often, to be discovered *nowhere*. Other envelopes or cases, endorsed "Bills paid," "Bills to be paid," "Letters, etc., to be returned," and the *regular* putting together of all papers to be referred to, or disposed of, a task much facilitated by the India-rubber rings, and, above all, a *prompt* answer to any letter that must or ought to be answered, whether in kindness, courtesy, or justice,—all this will do much to save the time and clear the consciences both of gentlemen and ladies.

XVIII. Always write down the name and address of any person with whom you are connected or have dealings. Remember also to give *additional distinctness* to your characters in writing the names of *persons* or *places*; for, if not previously known, many different versions may be made from the ups and downs which—in words of familiar use—are guessed as much as read. A BOOK OF DIRECTIONS is kept by several of my friends, and is found of great utility.

XIX. A store of paper and string for the ready putting up of parcels is highly advisable; and, like everything that may be wanted in a hurry, should be prepared at leisure. Books borrowed should be conscientiously covered, cared for, and duly returned within the required period. Those who borrow many, would do well to

have a separate shelf or corner for whatever is not theirs, and to write the name of the owner on the paper cover of each volume.

THE UNOSTENTATIOUS AND HABITUAL EXERCISE OF STRICT JUSTICE IN THESE AND SIMILAR MATTERS WILL DO MUCH TO RAISE THE STANDARD OF MANNERS AND MORALITY OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD. IT IS DICTATED BY THE *ONLY* SPIRIT OF *TRUE* GENTILITY—ATTENTION TO THE FEELINGS AND THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS—AND WILL MAKE YOUR BOYS AND GIRLS REAL GENTLEMEN AND LADIES, FAR BETTER THAN THE VERY “HIGHEST SOCIETY” IN WHICH THIS CHRISTIAN VIRTUE IS NEGLECTED



## CHAPTER XI.

CONTRIVING, CONTRIVERS, AND CONTRIVANCES.—Make-shifts.—

The value of all things dependent on their being wanted.—

Contriving especially, when necessary, a great comfort, when superfluous, a great evil.—Examples of both kinds.

“To everything there is a season,” says the wise man ; a truth of which the actions of the *unwise* afford continual negative confirmation, by showing us how completely all that, at *certain* times, and under *certain* circumstances, is a blessing and advantage, is, under *other* circumstances, and at *other* times, entirely the reverse. Food, finery, light, fire, labour, repose, wit, admonition, praise, kindness, or whatever else is, in itself, externally agreeable or intrinsically valuable, must add yet to its acknowledged merits, that of *being wanted*, before it can be certainly acceptable.

Now, amongst the many things that, accordingly as they are wanted or not, are comforts or annoyances in families, the talent of *contriving* stands conspicuous. Where it *is* needed, and exercised promptly and discreetly, it acts like oil upon the troubled waters of domestic difficulty, and we pass over them in confidence and safety ; where it is employed unnecessarily, it is like grease upon a slippery floor—and allows nobody to move about a house in peace. Whilst there are persons who will meritoriously discover or invent an alleviation, if not a remedy, for every inconvenience—there are others who “never can let *well* alone,” and are never satisfied, unless some *ingenious inconvenience* is made to usurp

the place of *simple common comforts*. I have been credibly informed by the guests of one of these contriving geniuses that, having innocently and unsuspectingly entered an ordinary-looking apartment in the house, it *literally turned round with them*; and as they had not the secret of making it turn back again, and the door by which they had entered was hidden by the unexpected move, they could not get out, and were obliged to call lustily for assistance. The prisoners were duly released, and the peculiar construction of the apartment was scientifically explained and justified; and many other scientific and satisfactory explanations were given for many other unsatisfactory surprises and disasters; but after some of the party had been very nearly drowned, and others almost suffocated, it was difficult to persuade the visitors of this enchanted castle of the superior advantages of contrivances which, although acknowledged to be exceedingly *ingenious*, were felt to be most dreadfully *uncomfortable*. The above is, certainly, an extreme case, though warranted a true one; and those only with whom money is "no object" are likely to fall into such *wonderful* extravagances; but I have seen the spirit of superfluous contrivance quite as mischievous and irritating in smaller establishments; and I never could discover that the wife who could not "drink her tea without a stratagem" was as pleasant, or even as safe, to live with, as the wife that could: her tea was decidedly and proverbially most execrable. There are, however, some situations and emergencies in life that demand extraordinary exertions and contrivances; and the General's lady who, when accompanying her husband during his campaign, put her babies to sleep in open drawers, and her elder children upon

shelves, deserved great credit, and introduced much comfort into her narrow quarters; whereas, had she resorted to any such expedient in the commodious nursery belonging to her husband's mansion, her conduct would have been judged ridiculous, if not insane. Generally speaking, the wife of the humblest artisan in the vicinity of a town in England, will have less occasion for contrivance than the greatest ladies that ever *travelled*, either with their husbands or without them.

Still, in the most easy and monotonous existence, no one is exempt from circumstances in which the means and materials we have at our command are, apparently, insufficient to procure us what we very much require, or to deliver us from annoyances by which we continually suffer; and here it is, that the talent for seasonable contrivance, the power of moulding what we *have* into substitutes for what we *are denied*, the power of producing good "makeshifts" where the unwise would bring forward bad ones, and the stupid and indifferent must remain in difficulty—this is, in *all*, a valuable accomplishment; and may be reckoned as several hundred pounds in any woman's marriage portion. Of course, nothing that has, originally, a specific and restricted use, can be as entirely satisfactory as the absent desideratum of which it is made to take the place; yet, under the direction of the ingenious and the judicious, many a humble resource will be available to procure comfort or alleviate inconvenience; and this, as the world and its inhabitants are constituted, is no despicable consideration. As each emergency would require a different expedient, it would be impossible to give *directions* for contrivances; but, as *specimens* of the application of

simple and inexpensive means to promote comfort in a small dwelling, I subjoin the following :—

Instead of Venetian blinds or outer shutters, where the sun is powerful, blinds, or small curtains of white holland, towards the window, and dark silk, or stuff, towards the room ; and again, lined curtains within, to be drawn close before the sun comes round, and undrawn after it goes off. By this fourfold protection from the summer heat, composed of materials that would otherwise have been “lying by,” I have known shutterless bedrooms kept exceedingly cool and comfortable, which, with a single white blind, and the windows open during the heat of the day, were scarcely habitable.

In some cottage sitting-rooms, the garden door opens into them, and some other door opposite insures a thorough draught, which, however agreeable in summer, is very comfortless in winter. Curtains before the doors will make such rooms both snug and pretty ; and for those who settle down for a long winter’s evening, and are not likely to have much going in and out, the trouble of undrawing them occasionally will be a small inconvenience, compared with the warmth and snugness of the room when they are drawn. If properly hung, they can be pushed aside from within or from without.

The great triumph of adaptation is, when that which, in *one* shape, would be unsightly lumber, is transformed into something comfortable, useful, tidy, or even elegant. Such transformation have I seen effected, in regard to certain chests and boxes, which, either hidden under beds, put up in some “out-of-the-way,” or left in some very much “in-the-way” place, but necessary for the stowage of what drawers and closets were insufficient to contain, were, when out of commission, and on

half-pay, most ugly and inconvenient. Even such chests and boxes have been introduced to me as very available and respectable-looking pieces of furniture. A little spare damask, and a cushion to match, afforded a seat or settee to the eye as well as use, and the box secured alike from damp or dust, and easily "got at," gave ample room to many articles of wearing apparel that would have been crushed in drawers, or must otherwise have been dragged out from band-boxes beneath the beds. In various other ways—on landings and in attics—such coverings as the piece-box may easily supply, and ingenuity will advantageously apply, will make *lumbering* boxes useful and presentable; and, at the same time, preserve them from mildew and decay: the space beneath the beds will be kept unincumbered, and the house delivered from that look of departure and discomfort which the sight of uncovered packing cases, or the presence of "things about" that should be put away, is calculated to give.





## CHAPTER XII.

A WORD FOR THE WASH.—Feminine instincts which make “the great wash” rather a time of enjoyment than annoyance to many women.—Different feelings entertained on the subject by most men.—A good wife will prefer putting out anything else in her housekeeping, to putting out a good husband on any occasion.

AMONGST all the occasions in which it is most difficult and glorious to keep Muddle out of a family, “the great wash” stands pre-eminent; and as very little money is now saved by having *everything* done at home, many ladies, with the option of taking another servant, or putting out the chief part of the washing, have thankfully adopted the latter course. Others, on the contrary, who have good drying-ground, and good-natured husbands who will dine in the city, very much *prefer* having their “own things” done under their own directions; and in many mistresses as well as maids, there is a kind of feminine instinct which makes that season of domestic excitement and “chartered” chattering, called the “great wash,” a period of enjoyment rather than of annoyance; and a garden full of sweet and whitening garments as pleasant a sight and glorious a victory as sun can shine on. The different principles on which this important business is conducted in different households are always striking and characteristic. In some, as it is conceded that the persons who stand at the wash-tub cannot lawfully be called away, excepting to satisfy their ordinary and extraordinary appetites, it

is not uncommon to perceive all the crockery, etc., that has served for the day's numerous repasts, all over the kitchen, so that there is not a corner for the clean clothes when they come in from the drying-ground ; whilst the beds up-stairs are only made a few minutes before the family retire to rest. In other houses, the very fact of its being washing-day, which is, elsewhere, *the excuse* for such confusion, is considered *the reason* why beds should be made earlier than usual, breakfast and tea-things washed up out of hand ; and other articles that may be left till to-morrow, removed from the scene of action. This last more comfortable state of things, effected either by extra assistance from the mistress, or the attention of the servant to her most necessary duties, and facilitated by suitable preparations the day before, tends more to advance the conclusion of the wash, than if all that might be done by twelve in the day were left to be begun at twelve o'clock at night.

Where there is a good deal of washing and no hired assistance, it is well to have what does not require boiling, but demands time and careful getting up, done *one* week, and the remainder *another*. This will render it more agreeable for the lady to help in the ironing of her laces, or whatever demands more delicate handling than can be expected from clumsier fingers, or during the confusion and fatigue of "the great wash ;" and, as in all probability, the fine things that she did *not* iron, she would have had to *mend*, her labour will be leisure gained. To mistresses who *prefer* knocking themselves and their servants up at one time, to the division of inevitable household occupation, this will not appear an advantage ; but others, who have only a certain portion of strength, and whose skill and management enable

them to perform what is comfortably *within* their powers cheerfully and out of hand, will agree, that where there is a choice of evils, it is wise to choose what is, *to them*, the least.

When a gentleman who dines at home, *can't bear* washing *in* the house, but gladly pays for its being done elsewhere, the lady should gratefully submit to his wishes, and "put out" anything in her whole establishment rather than so generous a husband.



## CHAPTER XIII.

HONESTY.—The author fears that, like sermons on attendance at church, this chapter may only be listened to by those who have least need of its instructions;—Hope that the thoughtless may happen to light on this saving truth, that *Debt wantonly and knowingly incurred is the meanest species of dishonesty.*—Comparison between the guilt and punishment of thieves in rags and thieves in fashionable attire.—True cause of the carelessness in regard to debt, so common in all classes, and so especially fatal in the middle class.—Different fate and fortune of those who seek the praise of God in preference to the praise of men.—The praise of men must eventually be the portion of those only who seek the praise of God.—*Must-haves and may-haves.*—Advantages possessed by the honest in adversity.—Dignity of the character of a conscientious tradesman.—Degradation of a titled spendthrift.

“OWE NO MAN ANYTHING, BUT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.”—  
ROMANS XIII. 8.

ARE any of my readers, not only conscientious, but *undaunted* church-goers—setting out in all weathers, holding on against all winds—regardless of the fate of their best garments or the fashion of their worst—careless of lingering cough or coming influenza—and entirely unmindful of every in-door temptation or ex-postulation that might keep them from occupying their wonted seat, and securing their parish priest from a mortifying tête-à-tête with his “dearly beloved Roger?” And, if so, have they not, in this exemplary character, and in consequence of their virtuous resolution, come in for the very subject which was the least appropriate to their spiritual necessities, namely, the culpable neglect

of persons who seldom or ever attend public worship—the whole discourse, and the eloquence and energy of the officiating clergyman being obviously intended for the express edification of the owners of the vacant benches; but excepting as favouring the comfortable assurance of their own innocence and superiority, peculiarly ill-adapted to the case of the few scattered, but constant listeners, who, from year's end to year's end, have come to church in spite of everything! It is to be hoped that the minority present are faithful reporters to the majority who are absent; for the discourses on the imperative duty and unspeakable privilege of worshipping in company, and seeking the blessing of our Creator in His holy place, are generally amongst the best and most powerful ever preached; and this, from various reasons. First, the obligation urged, being acknowledged by the consciences and understandings of the great bulk of mankind, and never called in question but by those whose character and conduct combine to show how dangerous its neglect; the subject *in itself* has greater advantages and fewer difficulties than any connected with disputed points of doctrine, and is, therefore, likely to be well treated. Secondly, as the omission of the duty he enforces can hardly be found in the catalogue of his own offences, the clergyman who has no substitute, feels singularly free from that spirit-daunting, tongue-arresting conviction, of practically disproving his own precepts, which fetters him on other occasions; and, therefore, he may give his eloquence full scope. No; whatever else may be laid to his charge—whatever mental or moral deficiencies may cause his parishioners, in general, to be especially afraid of leaving home on rainy Sundays—no

one can possibly accuse him of not coming regularly to church; and thus it is, with all the superiority of heartfelt innocence, that he upbraids or admonishes the guilty; his discourse having but the one disadvantage, of being chiefly listened to by those who have the least occasion for its instructions.

Now, in writing the present chapter, it is not without a fear that, like some such minister's best sermons, those only for whom it is not written will grant it their attention.

*Honesty!* which of the elegant and joyous brides—who, with everything that heart can wish, thinks of the condemned to gaol and tread-mill, as of beings of a different class and sphere, with whom she has not a thought in common—will fancy any exhortation on the subject of this chapter *can* be meant for *her*; whilst, of those whose many "*difficulties*" remind them of their infringement of this social virtue, who will *venture* on its consideration! The case of the latter is well-nigh hopeless, for *honesty*, in the full meaning of the word, is one of "the things that would make for their peace," and that they have, willingly, "put far from them;" but, for the former, I would fain hope that some happy *providence* may cause them to open on the following saving truth, that,

DEBT, WANTONLY INCURRED, WITHOUT THE CERTAINTY OF THE POWER OF PAYMENT, IS THE MEANEST SPECIES OF DISHONESTY.

What comparison is there, in fact, between the guilt of the poor uneducated *wretch*, who ventures, in rags and misery, to steal from the apparent superfluities of his neighbour, a portion for his starving family, and the *crime* of the well-fed, well-dressed, much-accomplished

*lady*, who sails into the shop of the unwary tradesman for articles of *useless luxury*; and, under cover of the respectability of her appearance and the address she gives, "defrauds him of property to a considerable amount!" The ragged culprit is watched and driven from the window—the fashionable *thief* is welcomed in complacently and bowed out gratefully, with the promise that "her esteemed orders shall be attended to immediately." When the goods she has *nominally* purchased are sent home, and they, like their real owner, are readily *taken in*, the grand piano is, perhaps, heard in her elegantly-furnished villa, or the carriage of some wealthier friend is standing at the door. The lady's place in church and in society is gaily filled, and, for a certain, or rather an uncertain period, the custom and company of "such a highly-respectable family," are considered an acquisition in the neighbourhood. But "a change comes over the spirit of the dream:" in course of time, the lady who *ordered* with *the greatest ease*, is discovered to *pay* with the *greatest difficulty*, and her commands are *not* so much *esteemed* as formerly. The dishonest beggar, if detected, is committed to prison; but, when things come to a crash with the fashionable thief, the lady's husband is simply declared "unfortunate;" and if forced to remove into a humbler dwelling, in a district in which she is not known, the lady is at liberty to pursue her former practices of shop-lifting, as far as circumstances will allow!

Alas! for the rottenness of the state in which such things are not only possible, but common! What a false, what a fatal standard of respectability is that which allows individuals who have lost their credit with the poorest shopkeeper, to mix with unblushing con-

fidence in what each quarter terms its "best society." This carelessness in regard to debt is one of the most deadly evils in the world, and, like all such, it has its rise *not* from small beginnings of *practical* error, but from a *great* and *important* deficiency in the fundamental *principles* of moral conduct. In all classes of society, but especially in the middle class, it may be traced to a false estimate as to what constitutes happiness, and what is necessary to secure us the esteem and admiration of our neighbours. Unhappily, the praise, or merely the *envy* of their fellow-creatures is, to multitudes, a far more attractive aim than the blessing and approbation of their Creator; and the possibility of obtaining the former by sacrificing the latter, once superficially, but practically acknowledged, right and wrong immediately change places, confusion of ideas is necessarily followed by confusion in their circumstances, and, when ruin and disgrace ensue, neglect and mortification from the *very persons* they hoped to attract by their extravagance, bring the conviction that, even as regards the poor praise of men, it is eventually the undisputed portion of such as live in the fear and for the praise of God! Truly, of all the infatuations that swell "the mystery of iniquity" existing in the world, that of incurring debts, and living in constant difficulty, for the sake of, ultimately, gaining a right to annoyances from inferiors, derision or pity from superiors, and blame and vexation from our equals, is the most extraordinary and unaccountable!

It is certainly not too much to assert that *every one* of the articles which have been thus foolishly and fraudulently obtained, and the possession of which appeared so indispensable to the vanity or the conse-



quence of those who longed for them, has, in its turn, helped to *lessen* their consideration, and to expose them to ridicule, if not, contempt. What, in fact, has the costly timepiece, "the curtains like Mrs. Pimlico's," the "love of a looking-glass, like that next door," which cost nearly a quarter's income—what have these and similar inconsistent belongings, brought upon their unlucky owners? Literally, *nothing* but *censure* and *ill-will*; and yet, for these, conscience and comfort have been bartered, and the elegant *lady* will expose herself to tremble before the humblest tradesman in the street, lest he should deny her the commonest necessities of life!

How opposite the 'feelings and the fate of those who, seeking for consideration upon right principles, and calling things by their right names, refuse to believe that anything can be essential to their happiness which is incompatible with their love to God and to their neighbour! How different the countenance, as well as credit of the young housewife who has, from the outset of her career, considered a clear conscience and peace of mind, the first things she *must* have in her establishment; *then* substantial comforts, and then a small fund for future emergencies, or, what is popularly termed, a rainy day! These were the valuables that she felt she *must* have in her house and home; and to these, she has now added a portion of those luxuries and ornaments, which, like the flowers scattered over the meadows, and growing amidst our daily bread, make us conscious of higher pleasures than the gratification of material necessities, and cause the veriest utilitarian to acknowledge "Que l'inutile est beau!" The number of things that people *may* have, who keep their *must-*

*haves* in their proper place, is perfectly astonishing, even to themselves.

The fact is, that, as there is no *policy* like honesty, it is likewise the very best *economy*; a scrupulous attention to the rights of others, securing, in return, a just, and even a *generous* consideration of our own. It is notorious that persons who never pay but when they cannot help it, always pay doubly, when payment is at last enforced. Whilst bills are running on, and they scarcely dare to *think* of the accumulating accounts, they can have no redress either as to the quality or quantity of the articles still sent in; and, if these are overcharged, or other items added to what they have really had, either the dreaded and neglected bills will not be checked at all, or, if glanced over, the most conspicuous errors *dare* not be refuted. With the creditors who do not quite give up such customers as *thieves*, they, nevertheless, must rank as *beggars* or poor people, and we all know that the former can never be choosers, and that the latter always pay much more, in proportion, than the rich. Now, from all these disadvantages, the honest are exempt. Whatever unaccountable fatuity induces the tradesman to furnish goods *a second year* to families who could not pay *the first*, he yet feels that it is to ready-money customers, or such as pay regularly, that he must look for countenance and support; and thus, to him, the parties whom he knows incapable of "going beyond or defrauding any man," are persons of importance, and *they* must have "the pick and choice of everything." Should an error creep into their weekly or their monthly account, it is immediately detected on the one side, and humbly acknowledged and corrected on the other; even if an entry, or an item *not* crossed

out, can be produced as an excuse for the mistake, the word of persons who would be yet more anxious to point out an *omission* in their bill than an *overcharge* will be not only courteously, but confidently taken: a clean conscience generally makes a clear head, and such customers really deserve the compliment that "they are most likely to be right." This is but *one* of the *many* immunities and privileges of all who live within their income and have cash in hand. It is theirs to purchase what they most require, *when* it is most wanted and where it is cheapest, as well as best; and *this* will often inake *their one* pound go as far as others' two. Their servants' wages being always duly paid, they may command the services of respectable domestics, or give immediate discharge to any who are not safe to keep. Their children, likewise, may be sent regularly to school, without being exposed to any of the unconscious slights, sometimes inflicted on pupils whose last quarters were not paid; and landlords, proverbially disobliging and "close-fisted," where rents were vainly called for, will paper, paint, repair, and whitewash, to an incredible amount, rather than lose the tenants, whose payments are made to the very day.

The whole Court-calendar does not contain a title conferring so much *real dignity*, and so many *substantial privileges*, as that of "A PERSON TO BE TRUSTED."

Nor can the reverses of fortune, or seasons of affliction, from which no virtue is invariably exempt, diminish the advantages belonging to the character of the trustworthy. Oh no! it is in the time of calamity that these are especially apparent. All the promises of God, and all the assistance of their fellows is, then, manifestly the portion of the righteous; and the world, bad as it is,

has neither the power nor the inclination to contravene the universal law, that "what a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The same *natural course of things* which makes the vain acquaintances, who have danced or dined at the houses of the extravagant and unprincipled, unable and unwilling to countenance and help *them* in their distress, will bring to the necessities of the frugal and conscientious, the real friends and unfeigned sympathy which, in their *prosperity*, they had deserved and cultivated. As they never wished to be envied, no one wished to exult over them; as *they* have shown unostentatious kindness to others, delicate and unasked liberality will now be gladly proffered to *them*. They may be in *difficulty*, but they will not be in *difficulties*. The *causes* of their calamity will be as readily perceived as the calamity itself. No concealments, no subterfuges, no bills of extravagance, nor bills of accommodation—none of that fearful mixture of misery and misconduct, which makes the prudent withdraw his hand, and the benevolent restrain his heart, lest unavailing help should encourage the recklessness which leads to inevitable ruin—will *here* interpose between calamity and its relief. What is trusted to the probity of the husband will be *safe* from any imprudence in the wife; *neither* have any connexion with the wicked who "borrow, and pay not again," and the righteous may, therefore, freely show *them* mercy, and either give or lend.

Nor should any mistaken notions of independence, or ungenerous suspicion, cause the honest to shrink from receiving such assistance as adversity may frankly ask, and prosperity will gladly give. It is our privilege to help one another; and those who put their trust in God have no occasion to fear what man may *do*, or what he

may think, where *respect* is as obligatory as relief. The means of obtaining employment or subsistence may be requested and accepted by all, with a clear conscience and an unblushing face ; and should these be endangered, the same Omnipotence which replied to the agonized appeal of conscientious poverty, by causing the axe to swim to him who had been compelled to borrow it, is equally ready *now* to secure to the "upright in *heart*," the power of discharging unavoidable and lawful obligations. The children of God, who are accustomed to call to remembrance the mercies that have saved them, will often recognize, in the wonderful combinations of daily occurrences by which their heaviest calamities have been lightened, instances of deliverance, scarcely less miraculous than any miracle recorded ; and would rather believe that *the continuous series of phenomena which we designate the ordinary course of nature* should be interrupted in their behalf, than that any who put their confidence in the *God* of Nature and of Providence, should *ever* be confounded.

The same scrupulous honesty which will prevent the possibility of wantonly incurring debts, must render every act, whether of omission or commission, that tends to shake the confidence of man in man, something to be shunned and to be ashamed of.

False statements, false weights, short measures, adulterations, smuggling, "grinding the faces of the poor," overreaching and underpaying, all that disgraces the commerce of this commercial country ; *that*, in a word, which THE ALMIGHTY HATETH, will be, likewise, an object of *horror and abomination* to every one who hopes for rest and felicity on "God's holy hill," after the labour and afflictions of this transitory life.

It is probable that many of my readers, if not in trade themselves, will be nearly allied to persons who are so ; and only such as have *not the intellect and good sense* to appreciate the advantages of their connexion, will think it a degradation to belong to what constitutes the wealth and importance of nations as well as of individuals. Let all, then, whose husbands or brothers keep a shop, and whose children may, one day, be apprentices, practically instil into their minds, those principles of honour and integrity which give *dignity* to traffic, and make all who exercise it in a worthy manner as respectable as they are indispensable to the idle loungers who affect to despise them. There are honest and worthy *Lords* as well as *tradesmen*, and *such* have a right to the world's respect ; but to serve behind the counter of a man, known to sell good articles at a fair price, and whose ancestors had done the same before him, would, in the eyes of a sensible and virtuous woman, appear a far more enviable position than to share the coroneted carriage of a titled spendthrift, who, "*if everybody had their own*, would not have a rag to stand upright in."

NOTE.—Whoever has not yet read Miss Edgeworth's charming tale called, "Out of Debt and Out of Danger," cannot do better than procure it. Also, an American book, entitled "Three Modes of Living," will afford pleasure and profit, in connection with the subject of the foregoing pages.



## CHAPTER XIV.

**LIBERALITY AND ECONOMY.**—These principles *inseparably* united throughout nature as well as revelation.—Every Christian bound to endeavour to act in the spirit of his heavenly Father.—The promises of God not mere Sunday *sounds*, but *things* of unfailing power.—The extravagance of stinginess.—Comparative cost of keeping a wife in health or a wife in sickness.—Fatal effects of liberality without economy.—Cruelty and injustice of taking from the good and prudent in order to give to the unprincipled and reckless.—The firmness and justice, as well as the forgiving tenderness of the father of “the prodigal son,” to be imitated by all who wish to reform and not to encourage the wanderers from their families, their principles, and their God.

As I am writing chiefly for the inexperienced, it is probable that some of my readers may consider the *united* exercise of *both* the virtues at the head of the present chapter, most difficult, if not impossible; but, that it is *not* so, every one accustomed to seek in the works and words of God, an explanation of, and a remedy for the faults and fallacies of man, will unhesitatingly confess.

We read, in the life of the blessed Saviour, that, whilst multitudes were not only *fed*, but *fully satisfied*, by His divine bounty, the *fragments* were ordered to be gathered, that nothing should be lost; and this *inseparable* union between *genuine* liberality and economy, which is so conspicuous in the recorded miracle, and throughout the entire Scripture, is but the pervading principle of nature, and overlooked merely because so mercifully common.

Now, all who profess themselves to be the children of God, are bound to act according to the spirit of their Heavenly Father; and heads of families especially, who are, by His appointment, the representatives of His Providence in their small circles, should humbly and earnestly endeavour to follow His example. By every enlightened Christian, therefore, Liberality and Economy will be deemed *inseparable* and *mutually* advantageous. The *same* good sense which *does without whatever is superfluous or inconsistent*, will readily *procure whatever is necessary or expedient*; the wisdom which freely gives the *penny* when 'tis needed, will direct the application of the *pound*; the benevolence which rejoices in seeing *everybody comfortable*, will interfere to check *whoever* is *extravagant*; and whilst others, who are "scrimping and screwing" their households and themselves, complain that, *in spite of such extraordinary carefulness*, they can't tell how the money goes, and that, at the twelve months' end, they are never any richer—those, who, taught by the words and works of the Almighty, have "devised liberal things," will stand and prosper by the same; and, when the worldly-minded and uninitiated, *perceiving so little management*, so much enjoyment, "wonder how in the world they do it," they will raise a thankful heart to the world's great Ruler, and acknowledge that "the blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it."

O! if the readers and hearers of the Bible would *practically* believe the precepts and promises it contains; if they would consider them, not *words* alone, but *things* of unfailing power! If trust, and kindness, and contentment—"doing justice and loving mercy"—were not to them mere Sunday or prayer-time *sounds*, but



principles of action for every day and moment in the week—elements, not only of *spiritual* but of *temporal* advancement and well-being, how quickly would the innumerable train of domestic evils vanish from our homes ; and what a multitude of blessings that “could not enter in because of unbelief,” would *visibly* take their place ! My dear young readers, let me entreat you to believe whilst it can avail you, that, as the *commandments* of God are no unimportant directions, which may be neglected with impunity, so the *rewards* attached to your obedience are no shadowy illusions, but *valuable and substantial benefits*. “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” “There is that scattereth and yet increaseth ; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.” These, and *many* similar passages are the words of the *Omnipotent* ; and, whilst the believer will acknowledge their fulfilment in his “heart of hearts,” the unbeliever, though incapable of appreciating the higher recompenses of God’s children, may perceive the blessing of the Almighty in their *account-books*. These will furnish convincing proofs that genuine liberality and economy must ever go hand in hand ; and that, in all instances in which health and happiness may be preserved by a little timely expenditure, *liberality is the best economy and parsimony the worst extravagance*. “It is better to pay the baker than the doctor,” says the proverb ; and the most rigid opposers of so-called unnecessary indulgence, those to whom comfort and enjoyment always appear superfluous, and contrary to what they consider the duties and business of life, even these will, eventually, find that it is both better and *cheaper* to incur any reasonable expense to keep a family in health and cheer-

fulness, than to add to *many* times the amount of what any healthy person would require, all the trouble and inconveniences of sickness. How often would the extra *bushel* of coal, if granted for *occasional* fires during the damp and fogs of autumn, effectually prevent the disqualifying rheumatism which *necessitates* the *constant* bed-room fires that will add several *tons* to the ordinary coal bill, without availing to *restore* the health and comfort that *the bushel*, seasonably accorded, would have *preserved*! And yet, what numbers who allow themselves a variety of expensive dresses and furniture that contribute *nothing* to their actual happiness or welfare, keep their unprofitable finery in a chill and unwholesome atmosphere, scarcely preferable to that of their last resting-place, to which they are unnecessarily hastening. The infatuation which denies to a household what is *most essential* in this climate, and without which sickness is secured, and everything like comfort banished, is equally melancholy and inconceivable. If *nothing* beyond the urgent necessities of life *can* be afforded, of course *nothing* in the shape of indulgence can be demanded; but, in the middle classes, few are so straightened as not to allow themselves *many luxuries* even should they retrench in other respects, and why those should be *most* objected to which are *the least* objectionable, can only be explained by that innate perversity in human nature which leads so many millions “to spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not.” From such delusions, all genuine believers are exempted: taught by God’s word and works, they recognize in the portion of this world’s goods entrusted to their administration, a means of alleviating misery and promoting happiness,

as far as it will reach ; and, whilst they gladly relinquish every object of mere fashion, or frivolous amusement, they consider it their duty and their privilege to furnish to each individual whose existence is connected with their own, whatever may be reasonably demanded to make existence desirable ; and, in so doing, they find that their families are not only *healthier and happier*, but that they actually *cost less* than others, who for the sake of a false economy, are exposed to continual hardships and privations.

In reference to this subject, I cannot avoid a word to certain well-meaning but mistaken housewives, who, being utterly incapable of refusing *any one belonging to them anything*, fall into the more amiable, but not less fatal error of stinting *themselves* in what is absolutely necessary for their health and comfort, and thus, rendering themselves entirely unfit for the duties of their position, if not shortening the period of their natural life. And here, I do not allude to the numerous class of ostentatious "self-deniers," who, like the Pharisees of old, abstain from reasonable enjoyments, in order to arrogate to themselves—together with an indefinite portion of self-praise—the right of censuring all not equally ascetic ; but to many simple-minded, conscientious and most kindly-hearted women, who, trembling as they realize the increasing expenditure of their increasing families, find no one else to stint, and nothing to retrench in but their own moderate requirements. For such I will transcribe the answer of a kind and sensible husband to his good lady's best reasons for refusing what was deemed essential to the strengthening of her health and nerves, and, *consequently*, to the comfortable and continued exercise of her domestic duties.

“My dear wife, if you are really tired of living for me and our children, I suppose you must shorten the period of your existence amongst us in any way you please; but, if your health and sickness are to be determined on as mere matters of pounds, shillings, and pence, then, I just ask you to remember what our family expenses are when you are active and able to see to things yourself, and what they have been whenever you were laid by; and then tell me how, if I can’t afford to keep you in health, I shall ever afford to keep you in sickness.” The wife and mother to whom this appeal was made, opened her heart and understanding to receive it, and tells of her fond husband’s wisdom with all the cheerfulness belonging to renewed energy and vigour, derived from obedience to his wishes.

But, if the exercise of economy without liberality can bring illness, confusion, and expense into a household—liberality, unrestrained by a just economy, is ever followed by distress and ruin. Instances of this are innumerable; but I would, especially, signalize that false and fatal indulgence, to *some* extravagant and *unprincipled member* of a family, which, whilst it utterly fails to reclaim the guilty, involves the innocent in undeserved and constant difficulties. *As in the world at large*, the wicked are allowed to mingle amongst the good, as a trial of their faith and patience, so in almost every *smaller division* of the world’s great family, there is some hapless individual, who, either from mental or moral deficiency, is a continual source of trouble and anxiety to relatives and connexions, an unceasing drain upon their resources, and an insurmountable bar to their advancement. The Almighty is “kind, even to the unthankful and the evil;” and thus it often happens

that the idle and extravagant, who, for wise but inscrutable purposes, are scattered amongst the industrious and conscientious, are endowed with some charm of person or of manner, which makes them dearer to the hearts they grieve than all who have never occasioned them a moment's sorrow. And, inasmuch as this human yearning after that which has "gone astray," is a faint reflection of the full glory of pardoning mercy which will consume the sins and sorrows of the world—it is lovely and respectable; the brother cannot be too often pardoned—the prodigal cannot be too tenderly received—and our most inveterate enemy should have his *necessities* relieved with charity and cordiality. But, if we are bound to feel and act with *Gospel love and tenderness* in regard to the *offender*, it is equally incumbent on us to remember that *Gospel righteousness and wisdom*, without which we encourage the *offence*. In the beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son, we do not read that he had *more* than his *own* portion bestowed on him; and, gladly and fondly as he was welcomed on his return, the father who had yearned after his lost child, never sent him *fresh supplies during the period of his infatuation and extravagance*. No, he left him to experience the natural consequences of his prodigality, and reserved for him *at home* that competence and those privileges which would ultimately attract him to the paternal bosom; the father left *himself* the power to help his penitent child *when* assistance would avail. The wealthy and affectionate parent had, doubtless, felt the *disgrace* as well as the affliction caused by his son's degradation; and, with "bread enough and to spare" in his establishment, it must have been a hard struggle to forbear preventing, or at least

ministering to, the poor swineherd's utter destitution. But *his child's salvation* was his object, and *his child's sin* more dreadful to him than his *own shame* at the *consequences* of his iniquity ; and thus, with a love beyond all common affection, the father bore the agonizing consciousness of the painful discipline which could *alone* bring back the wanderer to his home and to his God.

How many prodigals who—under a system of unavailing indulgence, caused by the *selfish* shrinking of relatives from the *exposure* of transgression, involve themselves and all connected with them in *worse* disgrace, and frequently, in total ruin—might have been reclaimed to honour and happiness, if the example of the prodigal's father were *fully* studied and imitated. But, in far the greater number of cases, the portion and the immunities of *the innocent*, who work in modest frugality, are added to the portion of those who have wasted their own substance in needless and ruinous excesses. Again and again their debts are paid for them, and inconveniences and disgrace averted to the utmost ; until their understandings and their consciences becoming alike incapable of realizing *where* the penalty of sin should fall, it actually appears to them more *natural* that *parents and friends* should be contented with “the husks that the swine should eat,” than that their *own* unprincipled indulgences should be discontinued or *rebuked* in any way. The partial and unjustifiable liberality which thus bestows a premium on iniquity, is one of the most hurtful influences in domestic life ; and as a source of constant perplexity and distress in families who might, otherwise, live in comfort, and bring back *their prodigals* to reason, probity, and contentment, it cannot be too earnestly deplored and deprecated.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE TRUE AND ONLY FOUNDATION FOR ALL MORAL IMPROVEMENT.—The law of kindness.—What is the chief subject of daily conversation in the family circles of many professing Christians.—Deterioration of the intellectual powers and spiritual graces where the licence of scandal usurps the place of the law of kindness.—Cheerfulness, happiness, and security that reign wherever “the very bond of perfectness” is round all that wisdom and virtue link together.

“FOLLOW PEACE WITH ALL MEN, AND HOLINESS, WITHOUT WHICH NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD.”

WITH all the sermons extant in the world, it is not necessary that other publications should assume their character; but, as whatever is true and beneficial in the words of man, is *only* so, as it is founded on the truth and on the word of God, I cannot conclude my attempts to promote domestic comfort and happiness, without a *direct* reference to the great guide to every virtue and to every blessing:—THE LAW OF GOD STUDIED AND PRACTISED IN THE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL.

*Without* this foundation, all that mortal can erect either for himself or others, must tend to ruin and desolation; *with* it, the moral structure becomes “a habitation to dwell in,” and “to show the Lord’s glory and His goodness till He come.”

None of the readers to whom this work is addressed, will probably *dispute* this fact; but it is their practical acknowledgment of its truth that I now supplicate. Especially, would I recommend to their earnest attention, that “most excellent gift of Charity,” or Christian love,

which, more than all the wealth of all the world, or all the wit or wisdom of its inhabitants, will keep disorder and confusion from their hearts and homes, and bring whatever is lovely and elevating near them.

Of the numbers who possess the advantages of social intercourse and near relationship, how few derive from them the pleasures they would certainly afford, if "the law of kindness" were "under their lips," and if thoughts of kindness occupied their minds! How many duties are neglected, how many evil dispositions strengthened, how much Muddle is cherished and encouraged, by the numbers who are for ever dwelling upon slights and injuries, upon the unkind speeches of mother or mother-in-law, the unjustifiable acts of brother or of sister, the pride of grand acquaintances who never call, and the indiscretion of vulgar relatives who always stay!

Or, without any such particular heartburning, what is the sum and substance of the daily conversation and consideration of *thousands* who have husband and children, books and flowers, intellect and education to enable them to appreciate the wonderful works and providence of their Creator, and heart and nerves to comprehend both the excellences and weaknesses of their fellow-creatures, together with continual experience of the uncertainty of the brief period for the exercise of that pardoning love of their neighbour, which is the established test of their own portion in the pardoning love of God? What is the sum of the daily converse of persons thus liberally furnished for better things? Too often, alas! it is little, but idle, if not ill-natured, comments upon characters they cannot change, or conduct that they cannot influence; and far from this uncalled-for censorship of the defects of the sharers of universal



frailty, suggesting any salutary remembrance of similar or worse defects in their own persons or performances, the result of these discussions is, invariably, increasing *self-estimation* and complacency, and a corresponding diminution of all the faculties and feelings by means of which they might *effectually improve themselves*, instead of *ineffectually reproving others*.

If the endowments of the greatest geniuses and most distinguished intellects, merely enable them to act and excel in their *particular profession and avocation*, it is not likely that the multitude, who have but a common or inferior capacity, can devote their chief attention to what is decidedly their *neighbour's business*, without materially neglecting what is unquestionably *their own*. Accordingly, wherever the licence of scandal is substituted for "the Law of Kindness," housekeepers have, infallibly, *bad memories*; and they have, infallibly, *defective judgments* likewise; or how, whilst remembering so much that they had better far forget, would they wonder at their forgetting what it is their especial duty to remember?

But where charity continually prevails; where there is that strong *family feeling and affection*, not only towards the few closely connected with our private interests, but *all* for whom Christ died; then, whatever tends to disparage the character of *any* individual member of the community, is felt to be *personally* painful or disgraceful. The *evil* in the world is, therefore, the subject of prayer rather than discussion; the *good*, on the contrary, is constantly brought forward and rejoiced in. Instead of warnings for abhorrence or reprobation, bright examples of such as adorn the doctrine of their Saviour will form the topics of daily conversation; and,

inasmuch as *all* the poor insects of the earth derive much of their colour and constitution from the nature of the plants they feed on, and *being good* is ever the most effectual way of *doing good*, thus, all who earnestly and perseveringly seek after what is "lovely and of good report," shall certainly find it, and *imbibe* it, and communicate it; be made a blessing whilst they live, and leave a blessing when they die.

AS A MEANS OF FAMILY ORDER AND WELL-BEING, THERE IS NOTHING LIKE THE EXERCISE OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY. How clear is the head where the heart is calm and kindly! How little offence is *offered*, where none is ever *taken* or *supposed*! How pleasantly and steadily the work progresses, where all are at peace with the world and with each other! The hurry and flurry that cause so many disasters in the houses of the harsh or the impatient, are here unknown; mistakes and errors are readily acknowledged and zealously amended; whatever variations of temper or of temperature may exist *without*, *within* there is genial sunshine and wholesome ventilation. In such an atmosphere confusion cannot breathe; and whilst "the very bond of perfectness" is round all that virtue and wisdom link together, nothing that would disturb the sacred union shall have power to enter.

## CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER :—THE AUTHOR ACTUALLY INTENDS TO BE PERSONAL, AND EXPLAINS IN WHAT MANNER.—Several ladies, who suppose themselves or their acquaintances alluded to in the present volume, give in their names and are published accordingly.—The author's regret that she cannot be personal enough.—She wishes she could be personal in assistance as well as in advice to every young woman in a Muddle.—Unreasonableness of expecting that what is addressed to anybody to whom it is particularly suitable, should be personally applicable to no one. Finally, the author bids her readers affectionately farewell, and hopes that every witness of *their* house-keeping may feel certain that *they* are the last persons for whom any admonitions on the subject she has chosen could *possibly* be meant.

Yes, my dear Mrs. Smith, unwilling as I am to offend anybody, I cannot deny the truth of the accusation that you bring against me. You are perfectly correct, it is *your* Muddle I have attempted to describe; and if my description does not quite come up to the reality, the failure is unintentional, I can assure you. It is *your* Muddle, and *you* are the Muddler whose portrait I hope soon to have multiplied in several thousand copies; so all you have to do is to come out so fresh and orderly that nobody will know you.

"Well, to be sure, Ma'am!" says Mrs. Jones (Mrs. Jones, of — hill, six miles to the — of —; everybody knows the house), "it is an immense consolation that it is *Mrs. Smith* you meant; for both Mr. Jones and myself thought, from several passages in your book, that you must have had an especial eye *to us*; and if so,

we were thoroughly determined we *never* would forgive you." Good and charitable Mr. and Mrs. Jones! I fear then, that as far as *you* are concerned, I must go to my grave unpardoned; for whatever Mrs. Smith may find applicable to herself and family, I cannot hesitate to say to *you* what, of course, I did not say to *her*, that the *greater* part of my volume was written with an especial reference to yourself and Mr. Jones, and that I should have been quite grieved if you had not recognized your likeness. However, as Mrs. Smith has so boldly declared herself *the* Muddler I have described, I would, in your place, leave her all the glory of the distinction, and if you and Mr. Jones can alter such points in your domestic economy, or rather in your *want* of it, as justified my censure, nobody but yourselves will fancy you were, in any way, alluded to.

My dear Mrs. Martin! how delighted I am to see you in such good spirits! And your cousin, Mrs. Brown—I do not remember ever having observed a smile on her face before, all the years of our acquaintance; doubtless something *very* agreeable must have produced this change: allow me to offer my most heartfelt congratulations.

"Nay, we were only amused to think now nicely poor Mrs. Smith was taken in by what you had written for the Joneses, and what, before overhearing your conversation with Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Brown was half inclined to suppose must be a hit at *me*, whilst *I* fancied it was like the Browns or no one. Why do you shake your head? If you did *not* mean the Smiths and Joneses, pray whom *did* you mean?

You, my dear ladies! Smith, Jones, Brown, and Martin—Smiths with or without a *y*—Browns and

Martins with or without an *e* ; and, not only you, but *any* lady who, tracing her pedigree and peculiar style of Muddle to the Conquest, and rejoicing in some distinctive name, beyond the pale of *ordinary orthography* and subject to *extraordinary pronunciation*, believes that such common commoners as the Smiths, etc., should hardly be mentioned in the same world with her, and no more fears being confounded with any meaner individual than that Mont Blanc should be mistaken for one of the Surrey Hills—ALL, in a word, who *recognize themselves*, or who are, *indisputably*, recognized by their connections as guilty of the domestic disorder I have attempted to portray—it is for *you* I write. *Yours* is the “Muddle” I describe, *you* are the “Muddlers” I address ; nor is there any resource against the consequences of my *shameless personality*, but your effecting a reformation as quickly and quietly as possible.

Indeed, so far am I from disclaiming any personality in my efforts for your improvement, that I only wish I could make it *infinitely greater*. I wish I could be “personal” enough, whilst I bring my remarks home to your hearts and to your consciences, to introduce into your houses and your families the *living examples* whose bright contrast to your disorder and mismanagement has made “Muddle,” even under the most trying circumstances, appear equally odious and avoidable. I should like to be “personal” enough to show you how a spirit of contentment and a feeling of sufficiency may be evoked even amidst anxiety and poverty, and so react upon the physical and moral being of all around, that anxiety and poverty are fairly driven out of doors. I wish I could be “personal” enough to dust and arrange your furniture for you, to put away all that is *not* wanted

and to get out all ~~that~~ is—to wash your dirty children and give them air and exercise—to tuck up your trailing petticoats—to ventilate your dinner-scented rooms, and to put in those “stitches in time,” for want of which, your *new* things are looking *worse* than old, and your *old* things are disappearing altogether. In a word, I should like to cheer and to brighten your home and your existence, and *that* by such *simple* and *ready* means, that feeling your prosperity and welfare so easily within your reach, you should forthwith, in prayerful dependence on Divine assistance, hasten to secure them. Finally, I would gladly be *so* “personal” that *you* should have all the merit of such change and reformation—that whatever is beneficial in the “Home Truths” I have ventured to address to you should be adopted as *your own conviction* and principle of action—and that all the dignity and reward belonging to the establishment of “Home Peace” should be *yours* also; so that, whilst *my* admonitions should be all unmentioned, healthy and obedient children “should arise up and call *you* blessed,” and your fond and prosperous husbands “should be still praising you.”

O, my dear sister pilgrims! the state of whose earthly tents must not only be of immense importance to you and yours during life’s uncertain journey, but may influence your condition at its close—perhaps determine your dwelling for eternity—let no unworthy shrinking from what is personally applicable in my little volume prevent your being impressed by truth that you may not hear or would not listen to from friend or relative, but which, *if candidly received*, may save you. Order and confusion, happiness and misery, honor and dishonor, are

before you ;—*which* shall be your portion, and the inheritance you bequeath to your posterity ?

Precious are the deposits entrusted to your keeping,—sacred and arduous are the duties appointed for your performance—glorious is the reward promised to your fidelity and your success. Your duties and responsibilities are “personal,” and cannot be made over to another—your recompense is “personal,” and, once deserved, no one can deprive you of it:—surely the advice and admonitions which are to give you direction and assistance, must be “personal” likewise, or, how are you to profit by them ; or how can you reasonably expect from a book addressed to *anybody*, that it should be applicable or suitable to *no* one !

And now, my dear young friends, permit me, with all the personality belonging to a heart-felt desire that you may *all and each* be personally and particularly good and happy—to bid you affectionately farewell.

May no *other* “Muddle” than *this* now offered to your perusal, be seen to cross your threshold ; and may every one acquainted with you and your establishments, feel perfectly convinced that, *whoever else* may stand in need of the precepts or answer to the descriptions of my little volume—*you* are the *last persons* for whom it could possibly be intended.

END OF MUDDLE DEFEATED.

# COMFORTABLE PEOPLE.

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## DEDICATION.

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TO THE MEMORY OF THE "DEAR HEARTS AND HOMES"  
AMONGST WHICH ALL MY NOTIONS OF SPIRITUAL OR MATERIAL  
COMFORT WERE DERIVED, AND, MORE ESPECIALLY, TO MY  
VENERABLE AND BELOVED FRIENDS,

DR. AND MRS. BRICKENDEN,

THIS IMPERFECT SKETCH OF THE LEAST OSTENTATIOUS,  
BUT MOST BENEFICIAL PORTION OF THE COMMUNITY IS, WITHOUT  
ANY PERMISSION, BUT WITH ALL LOVE AND REVERENCE,  
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.



## COMFORTABLE PEOPLE.

ONE great characteristic of the present age is the constant endeavour to improve and to increase the conveniences and amenities of daily life, and to bring them within the reach of classes and individuals, who, a century ago, were expected to rest satisfied with the bare necessities of existence. No sooner is an inconvenience felt, or a "desideratum" recognized, in our ordinary or extraordinary occupations or appointments, than art and science hold counsel on the subject of remedy and supply,—some mitigation or invention is immediately produced, and "COMFORTS" appear in the windows of the smallest village-shop, or surround the hearth of the humblest cottage, of which palaces and castles were but lately destitute, but which the spoiled children of civilization now appropriate as "mere matters of course," scarcely deserving of their gratitude or notice. If, as is too frequently lamented, we have lost the power of "roughing it," as did our ancestors, everything is continually made smoother to us, and the most desponding pessimists" that ever grumbled must confess, that, if the world is as much "a vale of tears," to this generation as it was to any preceding, *we* have, at least, "wonderful bargains in endless varieties of cambric pocket handkerchiefs" with which to dry them.

Of comfortable *things* there is certainly no lack; and, if external means and appliances could suffice to make comfortable *people*, smiles would take the place of

tears, and cambric handkerchiefs, though multiplied a thousandfold, would be chiefly employed in congratulatory wavings from one comfortable person to another.

Mere *material* conveniences, however, can never create or increase the feeling of satisfaction in the human mind, *independently* of the spiritual constitutions of their possessors; and thus the World, instead of being *more contented* than it was in former ages, is, unquestionably, *more discontented* and *more fidgetty*; all its most *comfortable things* are often found in the habitations of its most *uncomfortable persons*; and, far from exercising on them any salutary influence, luxuries and conveniences themselves are transformed into extra and aggravating grievances; and only, in connection with *comfortable* people do we understand their value. It is from *persons*, and not from *things*, that the *feeling* of comfort must arise.

There are some curious statistical calculations made and published now-a-days in addition to the "old bills of mortality" and classifications for "The Budget":—For one purpose or the other, charity and curiosity are continually dividing and numbering mankind. Any one interested in the subject may be enlightened as to the relative proportion or sum total of bachelors and married men, householders and shopkeepers,—"*navvies*," bankrupts, thieves, pickpockets, idiots, paupers,—lawyers and doctors with practice,—lawyers and doctors without,—"*millionaires*," rag-merchants, — cat-decoyers, sausage-makers;—individuals who *let* lodgings—individuals who have *no* lodging; fine ladies and distressed needlewomen. As a companion to "the Red Book" and "the Blue Book," we have an ever-issuing "*Black Book*," containing lists of the wicked and the miserable,

and all that it pains the heart and puzzles the head to think of! Now, would it not be a most pleasing and profitable relief in the pages of the next general census, if some one would introduce the item of COMFORTABLE PEOPLE! They bear, alas! but a small proportion to the other subdivisions of society; and, as it is one of their principal distinctions that they are but little spoken of and speak little of themselves, it may not be so easy to discover them beyond the pale of our own immediate circle. But they are well worth any trouble taken; and for those to whom difficulty in a favourite pursuit is but additional interest, I subjoin the following characteristics:—

COMFORTABLE PEOPLE are, first, persons who are at peace with themselves and with each other, and disposed to make the best of everything and everybody; and that, not by the dangerous sophism of “calling evil good,” but by the power of separating good from evil, and a disposition to dwell on and multiply whatever is beneficial near them. There is a something about comfortable people which has an affinity to goodness and which repels evil; and thus, without any ostensible exertion on their part, or forced behaviour on yours, you actually feel not only happier but better in their presence than in that of others, though more highly distinguished or more zealous in your behalf. That which is true in *you* comes forth to meet *their* truth; that which is kind in *you* flows on with *their* indulgence; that which is unselfish in *you*, answers to *their* unaffected consideration; and you would as soon think of presenting yourself at the Queen’s drawing-room with galoshes, waterproofs and umbrellas, as of bringing before comfortable people the harshness or suspicion

with which you think it necessary to encounter the world in general: you *know* you will not want them.

COMFORTABLE PEOPLE are also, *persons of sound principles, good sense, and certain prudence in all the common concerns of life*; so that, if you can ascertain what is, at any time and under any circumstances, *best and wisest* to be done,—you know the course they will pursue. “He that walketh uprightly walketh surely;” and, although misfortune may have to be encountered by comfortable people as well as by others, you may be certain they will never leave the path of safe prosperity to *seek* it; and, how *much more* misfortune is *sought* than *met* with in the world, let the relatives of uncomfortable people declare! Comfortable people will not, then, run into debt, nor enter into idle speculations, nor attempt anything for which their talents or means are obviously insufficient. Neither will they, under any specious pretence, allow a false mercy to usurp the place of a just benevolence in their transactions. It is not their custom to steal or even to “borrow from Peter in order to pay Paul:” *their own* household and dependents will never be made to suffer from their generosity to *strangers*; and, whilst their general kindness may warrant the belief that they will *do all* they *can*, their prudence makes you equally secure that they will not vainly *attempt* doing *more*. Nor is this tranquillising confidence limited to the more important actions of existence; it belongs to the thousand daily “trifles” which affect our daily happiness and temper. If you send a parcel or a money-order to comfortable people, *an acknowledgment by return of post* is as certain as the post itself. If you ask a *particular question*, you may reckon upon a particular, direct,

and speedy answer. If you invite them as portions of an expected "houseful," you will know, at once, whether and when they mean to come, and you will be equally aware how long they intend to stay. If *you* are *their* guest, you will have no doubt of your kind and hearty welcome or the pleasure your company affords, so long as it is requested. Whatever indulgence is offered or conceded, you may freely and cheerfully accept; for comfortable people, though benevolently, are truly *sincere* people, and you may therefore take them at their word. To the numbers of chilling and irritating recollections of "grievances," and causes of repressed dissatisfaction, that "come out afterwards," there will be no contributions from the memories of comfortable people.

*Comfortable people are seldom great talkers*, but what they say is ever singularly to the purpose, whilst their *manner* of speaking is most agreeably free from the "hammering and stammering" and other painful peculiarities belonging to individuals who talk more than they think, and who forget that the *object* of speaking should be to make the persons spoken to hear and understand. As the *writing* of comfortable people is always legible and never crossed, so their *speech* is distinct, concise, and harmonious; they have taken pains in this respect and have been successful; so that deaf people who are hourly made deafer and deafer still by the vain bawling of their friends and relatives, *always* catch what is said by comfortable people, although *they* never bawl.

But, if more indefatigable or more elegant *talkers* than comfortable people are to be found, as *listeners*, they are unquestionably without a rival, being the best

and brightest in the world. Then, too, if you are not disposed to talk or be talked to, they are the very persons with whom you may sit comfortably silent: for they have their *own* "inner life;" and the cheerful placidity of their countenance, when the external world has no claims on them, shows what enjoyment this must yield.

*Comfortable people are, however, not absent people,* but are accustomed to exercise their attention and other faculties upon all that tends to increase comfort, and save time and trouble wherever they may be. It is the rarest thing in the world that *their* fire goes out; and, if *you* are more forgetful, and intimacy warrants the interference, it is *their* friendly and judicious stir, or *their* saving bit of coal that keeps *yours* in. Is there anything that should be taken *down* stairs, comfortable people are sure to remember it when something else is just brought *up*. Should they give you a commission, it accords with your leisure and your line of route: and, if aught they procure for you does not exactly suit you, *they* are the only persons who will *not* find you unreasonable or ungrateful. Also—a matter that saves an immense deal of uncomfortable feeling in the world—they are certain to repay whatever is laid out for them; and, on their part, make no scruple of receiving payment for any *commission* given them. In all such things, they are delightfully "off-hand" and unaffected; and although it is certainly more consonant to their instincts to give than to receive, they can, when expedient, *accept* as simply, cordially, and graciously as they *bestow*. Comfortable people are not in the habit of leaving their goods and chattels behind them, but they are certain to bring back anything left by mistake with them, or to

forward it by the first safe and convenient opportunity. In general, they have charming memories, *excepting* for slights, injuries, and offences, which always disappear before the evening sun, never to rise again. But all that is good or likely to do good is ever present to their minds. Their greatest success or prosperity would only *remind* them of any good office it enabled them to render; their heaviest personal affliction or annoyance would yet leave them at liberty to notice, and, if possible, to remedy, whatever could affect or annoy another. In a word, whatever "wits" comfortable people have, they are sure to "have *about* them," and their clear faculties as well as their kind feelings are ever at the service of "their neighbour."

Although no persons put themselves out of their usual routine with a better grace, *when necessary, comfortable people are not given to victimise themselves unnecessarily.* If you are unavoidably detained beyond an appointed hour, you will not find that they have spoiled either their dinner or their temper upon your account. If being less punctual than they are is one of your *habitual* foibles, their open good-natured scolding will be as expressive of entire forgiveness, as the ceremonious "pray don't mention it, it is not of the slightest consequence" of *uncomfortable* people would be of their glum resentment. On all other occasions, when the convenience of others is to be considered, it will never be ostentatiously connected with their own annoyance. They wish to see *everybody* comfortable, and recognise how impossible this is where *anybody* is to be made miserable: comfortable people will, therefore, when they oblige you, do it with the least possible inconvenience or injury to themselves.

*Comfortable people are comfortably and seasonably dressed.* You will never have to shiver at the sight of their muslins in November, or lament over their velvets in the dust and heat of June. Nor will the *season of life* be less regarded by them than the *season of the year*: the comfortable elderly gentleman will not ape the fashion of the youthful fop, nor comfortable grandmothers excite the pity or ridicule of their descendants by emulating the charms and tresses of *fifteen* in auburn wigs and roses. Good, simple, and well fitting, in every sense of the term—the costume of comfortable people shows that, as *they* are not ashamed of *their age*, *their age* will have no reason to be ashamed of *them*.

*Comfortable people will have comfortable things about them*: their furniture and household appointments being ever the reverse of what is stigmatised as “gimcrack.” You may lean back against their chairs, or lean forward on their tables, and neither will “give way” though you do. Their sofas, if not of the very newest fashion, are infinitely preferable to any invented either before or since—their grates draw to admiration—their fenders are just the right make and height for putting one’s feet on; and, although from a very early period of your acquaintance, you have had an inward consciousness that you *might* stir their fire unblamed, your remembrance of the fire of comfortable people for seven times seven years is connected with the conviction that no poke of yours could ever have improved it. One remarkable characteristic in the apartments of comfortable people is, that they always appear larger in proportion to their actual dimensions, than those of others. You have room to breathe and room to move, and are never obliged to tumble over half a dozen things you do not



want, in your progress towards what you *do*, as has so often happened to you in houses double the size of theirs. Somehow or the other, the furniture of comfortable people always takes the least possible space and affords the greatest possible convenience; and all is so simply and naturally arranged, that you cannot fancy any other disposition *could* have been attempted by persons in their senses, which comfortable people always are. Then, too, there is such an exhilarating wholesome atmosphere in rooms that are regularly and discreetly ventilated, and in which nothing rusty, musty, or fusty, is suffered to abide. There is, however, no feeling of *bareness* connected with these immunities. If more free from "dust-traps" and "rattle-traps" than ordinary, the dwellings of comfortable people will, nevertheless, contain many objects of beauty or curiosity. Something interesting to children of all ages will draw you towards mantelpiece and cabinet, and little histories of years that have long passed, and affections that endure for ever, will attach you to each ornament and keepsake, and bind your heart yet more closely to the excellent possessors.

*Comfortable people enjoy the inestimable blessing of having comfortable servants.* "Where in the world *they* find what is *not* to be had in it;" or, *how* in the world *they* retain what *nobody* can ever keep," continues an impenetrable mystery to all *uncomfortable people*; but, spite of "the thing being utterly impossible," comfortable people *do* find comfortable servants, and keep them too. If you meet with *new* faces in their houses, you may be tolerably sure that the *old* ones are smiling in some dwelling of their own; for who would leave such a comfortable place excepting to get comfortably mar-

ried? And, if you go and see the old servants whom you remember from your babyhood—which, *of course* you will, if possible—the humble, but bright reflection in their homes of what you observe in the families that they have left, will convince you that there may be comfortable people in all stations; and that the next best thing to being comfortably waited on by others is to be able to wait upon yourself.

*Comfortable people, notwithstanding all the above advantages, are not “infallible,”* or you would hardly be so comfortable with them as you are. They *do* make mistakes *sometimes*; or they have some small innoxious habitual weakness or peculiarity, which, as it is constantly remembered to excuse in you what you could not excuse in yourself, nobody seems inclined either to correct or quarrel with. As they are not qualified to “set themselves up,” they are not tempted to “knock other people down;” and whilst their more partial friends and admirers cannot or will not perceive a fault they have, their *own* memories or candid perception of the high standard of virtue they have ever before them, preserves a fund of indulgent sympathy with the frailties or mistakes of *all* ages. With comfortable people, the general confession of our being “*all miserable sinners,*” does, actually, *and particularly* include *themselves*.

There *is*, however, one immense drawback to the pleasure of an intimate acquaintance with comfortable people—namely, that it is very hard work parting with them. No luxury or amusement can make up for the loss of what we have enjoyed *with them*,—no other individual, however gifted, however excellent, can *at all* supply *their* place. We turn to them in every want, and “we want them at every turn;” so that it requires

the constant remembrance of our obligation to follow their example, to prevent our increasing the number of *uncomfortable* people in their absence. But, even here their happy disposition and reasonable conduct come to our relief and afford us the only solace of which our grief at separation is susceptible. We are quite sure that, as they have no monomania for any gratuitous martyrdom, they will be as prudent in regard to their *own* health and welfare as they were kind and judicious on behalf of their friends. Their unaffected good sense makes them recognise the fact, that, persons who are well are generally much more useful and less troublesome in the world than persons who are ill; and accordingly, they consider it their bounden duty to keep as well as possible. If comfortable people have a cold—a rare occurrence with them—we know that they will do their best to get rid of it, and *not go on* “sniffing and snuffling” in defiance of all the remedies they prescribe to their acquaintances. A *bad* cough will not be *zealously* made *worse*; and, if medical aid is requisite, it will be obtained *whilst* it can be of use. With comfortable people, also, we may be sure that “no news is really good news,” that we may depend on the truth of any statement sent; and that, if the services of any able and willing to help were needed, they would be freely asked for or accepted. As far as loving hearts *can* be set at ease by any created being in this state of ignorance and anxiety, our hearts may be at rest concerning comfortable people.

But ah! there is *another* separation appointed to us *all*, which the dearest friends who leave us cannot *subsequently* mitigate, but which, without the hope of a reunion with those so fondly loved, would make the

remembrance of every past enjoyment a bitter mockery of present sorrow and privation. There is, "a bourne from *which* no traveller returns;" how shall we bear its passage by those who were such comfortable, such inimitable travelling companions in this uncomfortable world—how remain patiently behind when "ashes to ashes and dust to dust" fall upon their graves, and arise amidst their vacant places, to darken the dreary period of our protracted pilgrimage? Hush, Murmurer, hush, and Mourner, dry your tears! Visit their favourite retirement; draw nigh to their accustomed seat! Open the large Bible on their small but steady table, and look at the passages that gave comfort to the comfortable, and enabled them to scatter it around! "Can these dry bones live?" Ah! stop not there, "thy brother shall rise again." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." On and on, and back again—wherever a tear of gratitude has fallen, or the spectacles have served as mark, when earthly interruptions have been met by heavenly smiles! On and on, deeper and deeper still in the words and the wonders of salvation. "Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest," as *they* did, the precepts and promises for *this* life as well as for the life to come. "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." Oh! how the brightness of the spirit that has gone to God, who gave it, falls on the vacant place and dispels the darkness and solitude you felt! Where is the corruption of the corruptible—where the mortality of the mortal? "Earth has been restored to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust;" but really comfortable people must ever be *really Christian people*; as they did

their best for their perishing bodies, so you may be sure they neglected not their precious souls! but entrusting yours to One mighty to save, you have but to walk in their footsteps to the end, and when "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality," you may hope to go to those who can no more return to you; and, if nothing answering to our recollections of *Earthly comfort* in their society is to be recognised, to find it swallowed up in glory and in bliss ineffable.

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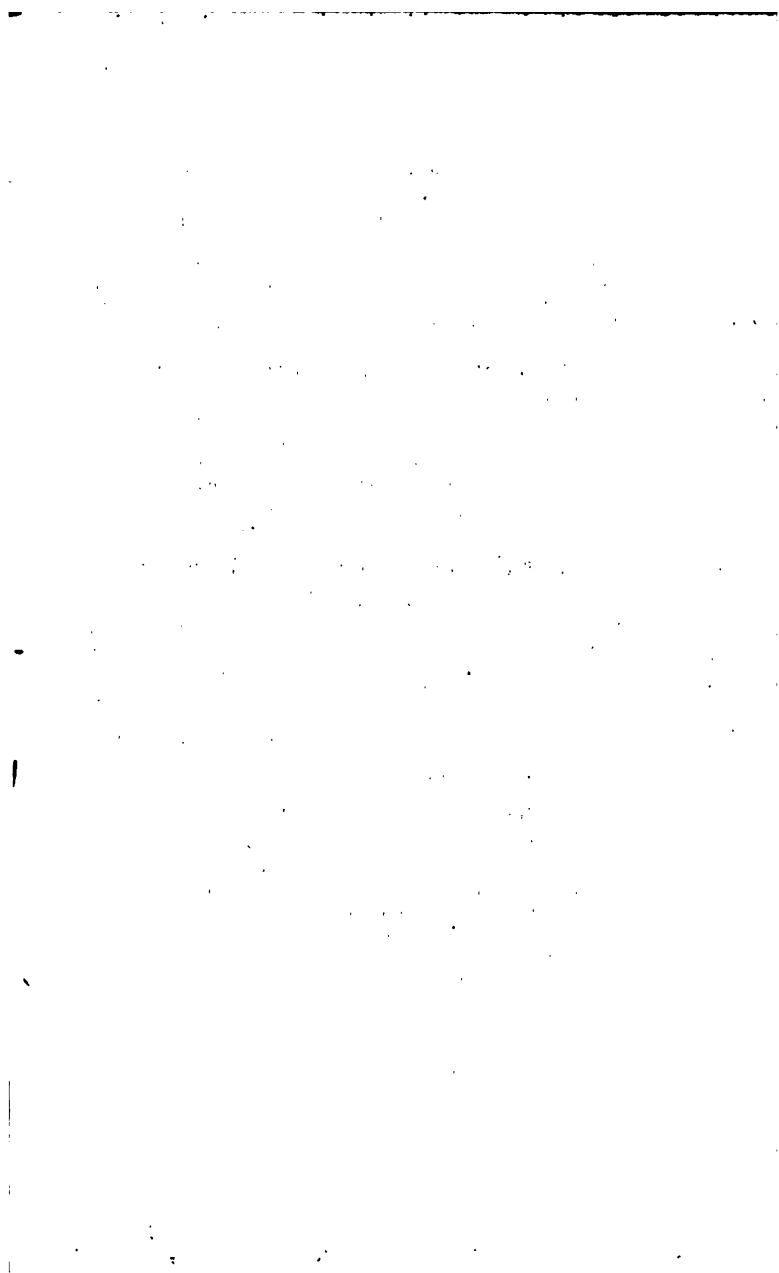
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